

Local Skills Improvement Plan 2023



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• FOREWORD

This Local Skills Improvement Plan has been approved by the Secretary of State in line with the approval criteria set out in the [Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022](#), and in accordance with the [LSIP statutory guidance](#).

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PART 1 THE LSIP PRIORITIES

The strategic context and underpinning rationale of the Cumbria LSIP is based on a set of sectors important to the Cumbrian economy (in terms of business population, employee numbers and GVA) and highly representative of businesses in Cumbria, encompassing a range of industries, geographies, size, demographics, and business activity. They were selected in discussion with the LSIP Steering and ERB Groups and drawing on data, analysis and priorities from documents such as the Local Skills Report and Cumbria Apprenticeship Strategy. Each is critical to the economic well-being of the county, highly dependent on the skills of its workforce and requires both sector specific skills and a range of cross-cutting skills. Between them they represent around 50% of the businesses in Cumbria and of its GVA.

These sectors are: Construction; Energy; Land Based; Manufacturing/Engineering (drawing out Food & Drink as a subsector); Social Care; Visitor Economy. Given the future Energy Transition to 2030 and beyond and Cumbria's historic profile in energy generation, energy is a potential growth sector. In the light of the requirement to focus, it does not cover all of the sectors important to Cumbria, or all of the county's skills needs. However the research undertaken enables us to draw out cross-cutting themes and there is information on other sectors that can be drawn from our research over time.

Priorities and key challenges have been arrived drawing on a mix of primary and secondary research. Primary research includes 1-2-1 discussions, focus groups, other meetings and surveys with employers, providers and other stakeholders (such as JCP, Careers Hub, Inspira and local authorities). This engagement includes groups such as the Workbased Learning Provider Forum (WBLPF) and Skills Advisory Panel (SAP)/People Employment & Skills Strategy Group (PESSG).

The SAP highlights as key issues declining working age population, low rates of productivity, relatively low level of higher level skills and local concentrations of worklessness and deprivation. Hiding within our employment rates are significant numbers of people with the ability to achieve and contribute more with the right awareness, ability to identify transferable skills, confidence, training and opportunities.

Improving productivity is of particular importance to Cumbria's growth because of our very tight labour pool. It is also key to increasing profitability, enabling higher wages, enhancing our ability to compete nationally and internationally and helping address input price increases. While the UK continues to struggle from sluggish productivity growth, most parts of Cumbria have seen productivity rates drop compared to the UK in recent years and our productivity rates overall remain significantly below national and regional averages.

There are key growth opportunities in the county that will be attractive (such as BAE recruitment for submarines, Sellafield, new clean energy and nuclear power and Barrow carbon storage and energy cluster) but they will pull people from other businesses and sectors, so growth in our working population is key. There is also a challenge in national infrastructure and energy projects in particular increasingly pulling young people and experienced workers away from Cumbria.

Energy generation has long been a mainstay of Cumbria's economy. The county is best known for its extensive nuclear facilities which have built a substantial pool of knowledge and expertise. In recent years a much broader range of energy generation activity has become established in Cumbria. The ambition articulated by Cumbria LEP in its 2022 Cumbria Clean Energy Strategy is for the county to become 'the UK's natural capital for clean energy generation', while simultaneously enabling the decarbonisation of its existing businesses. The UK's Net Zero 2050 target depends to a large degree on the country's ability

to find and exploit low carbon sources of energy. Cumbria – with its nuclear, offshore wind and growing renewables sectors - has the opportunity to become a major contributor to the drive for net zero in the UK over the coming decades.

The Local Skills Report (LSR) 2022 identifies key strengths as the apprenticeships system and strength of employer engagement in this (especially in manufacturing/engineering); particularly strong engagement with employers in vocational learning; good overall alignment of learning provision with the needs of the economy and engagement of employers with schools; and niche skills expertise in advanced manufacturing, nuclear and engineering (Levels 4-6). It identifies as challenges and issues:

- An urgent need to increase overall labour supply.
- Providing routes to meet immediate acute skills gaps (hospitality, adult social care, health, logistics, manufacturing).
- Increasing the pool of higher level skills developed in, attracted to and retained in Cumbria (current and future skills needs), supporting productivity improvement across the economy.
- Building a better digital skills base across the workforce.
- Developing and enhancing skills aligned to changes in the economy linked to development of clean energy, shifts in environmental land management and application of technology.
- Addressing concerns around a "lost generation" whose educational performance, qualifications and development of behavioural skills, which are important to employability, have been impacted by Covid 19.

The 2023 Apprenticeship Strategy for Cumbria highlights its key objectives as:

- Developing more quality apprenticeships in skills areas to meet the current and future needs of the economy (including hospitality, IT skills and the move to the green economy).
- Improving participation levels in apprenticeships overall (while improving gender representation in some areas, increasing uptake in older age groups and encouraging social mobility and workforce diversity).
- Improving preparation for apprenticeships and readiness for work (including supporting those entering apprenticeships with readiness to work skills and encouraging/promoting Provider Access Legislation).
- Improving delivery of apprenticeships and so outcomes (including better support for smaller businesses and involving retiring workers as mentors and trainers).

The LSR Evidence Base Refresh 2023 highlights the important long term drivers of skills demand as technological change, climate and regulatory changes, structural changes and working practices and cites key skills challenges for Cumbria as follows:

- Cumbria faces a significant demographic challenge over the next 10-15 years that is a continuation of past declines in core working age population. The population aged 16-64 fell by 14,000 or 4.5% in the 10 years to 2021 and is projected to fall by a further 16,000 (6%) in the 10 years from 2022.
- Unemployment rates have for some time, and are currently, particularly low in Cumbria, reflecting the imbalance between supply of and demand for labour.

More details on underpinning economic and strategic issues are provided in Annex B below.

Based on the above, our LSIP focus for the next 3 years and key changes we are looking to achieve are:

- Supporting the drive to resolve recruitment issues and workforce growth to achieve a workforce large enough for our current and growing needs.
- Supporting the drive to improve productivity and economic growth, in an inclusive way to deliver productivity and economic growth.

- Enabling businesses to take advantage of opportunities, such as those emerging in clean energy and the move to low carbon and address the challenges facing them (both general and sector specific) ensuring they have the skilled staff available to support this.
- Addressing immediate skills challenges, not least in land based, the visitor economy and care.
- Providing the basis on which we can build further for the future, enabling providers to invest in and develop to serve emerging needs (with sufficient lead time) and developing the pipeline of interest and engagement in our future workforce in these opportunities.

• PART 2 TAKING LSIP PRIORITIES FORWARD

Cumbria has benefited from being an LSIP Trailblazer area and hence has had a head start in identifying, agreeing and actioning priorities. Indeed we have already made significant progress. The approach that we, together with the range of stakeholders, have taken since beginning development of the Trailblazer proposal through to developing this latest report is that, while we are producing a series of reports and updates, it is the process which is key to our LSIP making a real difference to Cumbria. We have therefore been identifying and implementing actions throughout this time, so this report includes highlighting issues already being addressed as well as those not yet started.

Identified below are summary key priorities. Given that the majority of key issues are cross cutting, the following focusses primarily on cross cutting themes while drawing out some sector specifics. Underpinning this report is a wealth of more detailed research and information, and a detailed wider action plan, being made available to and discussed with relevant stakeholders to inform future activity e.g. Offshore Wind Deep Dive, Land Based Report, LSIP Survey Analysis, Energy Sector Report.

• 2.1 Key Priorities

• 2.1.1 Recruitment

The actions needed to address Cumbria's significant recruitment problems are varied and go far beyond the remit of an LSIP. We have included actions most directly related to skills. Others are being picked up elsewhere, such as through the Labour Supply Working Group. (which we are also active in).

Employers of all sizes cite challenges in recruiting enough staff, whether skilled or requiring training. Development and progression of existing staff can be a solution, but in turn requires more entry level recruitment. This issue has been exacerbated by Brexit and Covid-19, including through withdrawal of significant numbers of over-50s from the workforce. If staff cannot be recruited and retained the skills needed will not be available, whatever the provision.

An important element in recruitment is encouraging and supporting young people in education (and those involved in decision-making with them) to consider and be excited about the range of options in terms of industries, employers, roles and pathways, encouraging and engaging young people in moving towards current/emerging opportunities, and particularly shortages. Significant work is already underway but there is a need to further enhance awareness raising and careers advice and to build work into the curriculum more effectively, with particular focus on opportunities and gaps.

There is a need to do more to encourage and support employers to consider and use wider pools of potential employees, e.g. people with disabilities, prisoners/ex-offenders, service leavers, unemployed people, returners and care leavers, and ensure appropriate training is available.

There are generic skills and recruitment issues plus sector specific issues. In our business survey 48% of businesses across all sectors reported current shortages, roughly 2/3 of skilled staff and 1/3 people with training needs. Key issues highlighted included welders, mechanical/electrical engineers, tradespeople/construction (range of trades), social media/marketing and general manufacturing and production. Although not clear in the survey there are particular issues in care and hospitality, highlighted in 1-2-1s, focus groups and other research. Our research into land based indicates specific challenges in this sector. Our energy sector research highlights emerging opportunities. There is real opportunity in engaging young people in particular in opportunities related to clean energy/carbon reduction and future new green transition technologies, including the supporting digital skills.

In manufacturing, smaller (not necessarily small) employers report losing trained staff, including those who have completed apprenticeships, to larger employers, who can often pay more. These are often, but not always, part of the larger employers' supply chains. When recruiting, a number of businesses highlight concerns with the capability levels of staff in the largest employers compared with what they would expect in those roles, creating issues for flow of staff in that direction.

The situation is exacerbated by the recruitment underway at BAE Systems, challenging for BAE themselves and exacerbating the issues for other employers. The following figures for Early Careers recruitment over the next 3 years do not incorporate the full SSNR/AUKUS additional numbers (not yet finalised) but these are minimum intake numbers. Core recruitment for the next 3 years will remain fairly stable but they need to recruit around 600 people a year to cover natural attrition. The critical skills to be recruited are: cost estimators, cyber security, electrical, nuclear, product safety, software, systems, project management (bid management, risk, controls, planning), skills trades (welders, steelworkers), developers, architects and procurement. The majority of training will be through the SASK (their training academy), but most craft apprentices will spend their first year at Furness College. Overall the additional intake to cover SSNR/AUKUS will be 6,000 over the next 15 years (the yearly profile is still being finalised). BAE early careers recruitment for the next 3 years breaks down as:

| Programme | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Apprentices | 450 | 390 | 388 |
| Higher / degree Apprentices | 297 | 299 | 300 |
| Graduates | 302 | 306 | 293 |
| Industrial placements | 62 | 75 | 75 |
| Summer Internships | 67 | 81 | 103 |
| Totals for Cumbria | 1,178 | 1,151 | 1,159 |

In the visitor economy, chef skills/a lack of well trained and experienced chefs is the problem most quoted by employers. There are other significant gaps and a concern that working in the industry is seen as something you do as a part-time job before moving on to another career. Cumbria Tourism's Business Tracker shows that 73% are experiencing recruitment challenges and 66% are reporting skills shortages (especially chef skills, front of house/customer service and management).

In the care sector, recruitment and lack of understanding of care as a career is highlighted by employers as their biggest challenge. There is a view that young people are encouraged to work with children rather than in adult care. While there is pressure throughout the sector, the major pressure is on the NHS care sector, with cuts impacting significantly their ability to recruit and retain staff. The private care sector is still significantly challenged but does have more funds to alleviate the pressures of meeting wage demands, flexibility and training, which leads to NHS staff leaving for private care homes. The situation is worsened by loss of overseas staff and by wage rises in the visitor economy and retail, which have encouraged more who might otherwise have worked in care into these sectors.

So employers can fill recruitment gaps now/moving forward, the outcomes they are seeking are:

- The ability to recruit the appropriate calibre of people in sufficient numbers to the roles they require, both trained and requiring training through routes such as apprenticeships.
- An appropriate pipeline building in schools and colleges, aware of, interested in and working towards the opportunities they have available and will have in future (with further enhanced awareness raising and careers advice and guidance and work and skills built into the curriculum more effectively and with clearer career paths).

While the outcome sought by employers in all sectors is more staff, with the skills and/or with the aptitude and attitude for training, this is not freestanding and is interlinked with other issues below.

• 2.1.2 Basic and Functional Skills

At Trailblazer stage most employers highlighted issues with basic and functional skills (maths, English, business ICT) among young people and other new entrants to the workforce, and in significant numbers among existing staff. In our latest survey only 29% report that this is an issue for them, with 18% reporting issues with existing staff, 8% new staff and 9% with people coming out of education. 5% report issues with groups such as older people (generally ICT) or foreign workers (language). Reports include some issues around the level necessary for particular roles (such as written English for copywriting and maths for engineering apprenticeships). What these numbers hide is the numbers of employers avoiding this issue by restricting the job roles individuals undertake or implementing other work arounds, and, crucially, the restriction on the ability of businesses to enhance productivity. Lack of these basic skills also limits the ability of staff to progress and improve their career prospects.

In care, some staff have no computer/phone access and are not IT literate, with some reluctant to improve their digital skills, impacting on employers' ability to make full use of digital opportunities. There is a need in land based given the need to use IT for the new grants and to embrace opportunities.

To be able to operate more effectively and increase productivity (while also supporting staff progression) the outcomes employers are seeking are:

- Staff with the requisite basic and functional skills to enable them to undertake roles effectively and, where needed, access to appropriate, effective and affordable training for existing (not just new) staff.

• 2.1.3 Employee Behaviours and Emotional Intelligence (Employability Skills)

Employers report a need for improved behaviours and emotional intelligence. This impacts across the range of roles, sectors and levels. 43% of survey respondents report issues, and not purely with "young people leaving education". 29% report issues with young people leaving education, 11% with other new staff, 16% with existing staff and 5% with particular groups.

The skills and behaviours most identified were: communication 60%, customer service 50%, self reliance 44%, teamworking 44%, turning up regularly and on time 42%, dealing with difficult people/situations 40%, managing emotions 32%, understanding boundaries 28%, empathy 25%, diffusing/addressing complaints 23%, dealing with different cultures 18%. Initial work with young people in education indicates that they also feel they lack these skills and behaviours.

Employers, providers and other stakeholders (especially those engaged in IAG/initiatives to support young people) report the situation as exacerbated by Covid, with young people losing/failing to gain relevant social skills and developing significant resilience and confidence issues. There are opportunities to develop training on hybrid/remote working, and to develop a Centre of Excellence.

All stakeholders acknowledge this is not an issue which can be easily resolved through one route, and that a mix of measures are required. Many employers are providing coaching etc within the workplace but would welcome enhancements in education and training to help address at an early stage. Apprenticeships are seen to be an effective tool. In addition many employers are happy to work with providers and schools to help build appropriate activities into the curriculum.

To enable more effective operation in the workplace and support improved productivity, profitability and growth, the outcomes employers are seeking are:

- More people leaving education with these skills and attributes better developed.
- Ensuring activities within available training and development that help build these skills and attributes once in the workplace, plus provision of relevant short courses and resources.

2.1.4 Apprenticeships

While there is strong usage of apprenticeships in Cumbria, there is clear scope to enhance training and performance through increased use of this route (including higher level and degree apprenticeships). This also has benefits in terms of work readiness and employability skills. Apprenticeships also provide significant scope to upskill and reskill existing staff and people of 25+ in the labour pool, helping to address recruitment and productivity challenges.

Some employers highlight issues such as lack of understanding around apprenticeship programmes, sourcing and employing apprentices, use of the levy, dealing with requirements and time away from the job. While some receive very strong volumes of apprenticeship applications, others struggle to recruit. It can be challenging for smaller businesses to provide the support needed to successfully deliver apprenticeships and development of flexi apprenticeships could be a potential solution.

30% of survey respondents currently employ apprentices. The key reason given for not doing so was that they don't need them (44%). This is an issue for further investigation as it is likely that for many this is related to lack of awareness/understanding of the benefits and opportunities. Other reasons include time 14%, suitable apprenticeships not available 12%, cost 10%, difficulty recruiting 8% and difficulty finding courses 4%. The most common other reason was poor experiences in the past.

Of those who employ apprentices, 80% highlighted them as a good way of developing skills, 39% supporting staff retention and 33% cost effective training. 4% reported apprentices as a cheap source of labour, but 59% of those employing apprentices pay at above the relevant apprenticeship rate.

30% of respondents were levy payers who use their full levy and 10% levy payers who don't. 53% were not levy payers and 5% non levy payers who benefit from levy sharing, indicating opportunities for increased use of levy sharing as an opportunity.

13% reported that they always/usually struggle to retain after the end of the apprenticeship, 32% sometimes and 55% rarely/never. During the apprenticeship it is 9% always/usually, 24% sometimes, 67% rarely/never. Responses as to why some have few/no issues were not illuminating so this will be investigated further, given the challenges experienced by others, especially in manufacturing.

Employers continue to report that schools focus on university rather than promoting apprenticeships as an option (particularly in the case of more able students) and a need for more/more effective promotion to pupils, parents etc. around apprenticeship opportunities and benefits.

The Cumbria Apprenticeship Strategy states that often apprentices do not feel well informed about their programmes or their End Point Assessment prior to starting. Information tends to involve quantity and frequency of assessments, number of days spent with the employer/provider etc. but lack detail on content. Reasons for withdrawal vary significantly according to the apprenticeship and demographic factors. The research concluded that lack of support from the provider and/or employer is the driving factor for withdrawal and that a mismatch between expectation and experience is a contributing factor. A lack of employer support, inadequate time off for study, learning fewer skills than expected and unexpected impacts of Covid were cited as key areas where apprenticeships did not match expectations. Research by the LEP for the Apprenticeship Strategy indicated as barriers:

- Lack of SME capacity to support apprentices (no/very limited HR/training function).
- Cost of engagement and employment.
- Lack of understanding of the system and range of opportunities/types of apprenticeships.
- Lack of capacity to support one or more apprentices.

Our manufacturing/engineering focus group highlighted a lack of available information (especially on the levy) and need for clarity on progression pathways (which would help recruitment). They (including providers) highlighted difficulties recruiting/retaining trainers because of pay. They were keen to develop models enabling rotation of apprentices between employers, which they felt would also have supply chain and wider learning benefits. They say there tends to be higher fall out of more mature apprentices before the end because of financial issues and younger apprentices tend to need more guidance on career path and development. They find that inspiration and support of apprentices make a significant positive impact on quality and retention and perceive apprentices 22+ tend to want to learn and engage better than younger. Often the reason staff leave after apprenticeships is lack of fit with the business. Some use contracts which require apprentices to pay back part of the cost if they fail to complete or they leave within a certain period, but they can't do this with levy.

Those in food & drink production said apprenticeships need more production content and were concerned that days spent in college were not delivering sufficient benefit. They would value more flexibility of choice on course content. They would recruit more apprentices with more support and are keen on models which allow rotation around companies.

Construction employers, and providers, report that apprenticeship content would benefit from some modification and that employers struggle to understand the standards and end point assessments. Large housebuilders complain that apprentices do not spend enough time in practical work and so are not experienced or quick enough when they are put into teams on site.

Skills challenges and curriculum relevant to the land based sector, a number of which can be addressed through apprenticeships, are highlighted in 2.6 below.

In the visitor economy there is particular room for growth in apprenticeships, which would have a significant positive impact on the sector. Encouragingly, older employees are now entering the visitor economy sector via apprenticeships. However, staff can obtain higher remuneration in non-apprenticeship roles, so it is difficult to encourage them to take on an apprenticeship. This could be addressed by employers paying apprentices more.

Delivery of apprenticeships relevant to the visitor economy sector is patchy and there are structural barriers (rurality, timing, transport, back-loading) that limit take up. Discussion indicates that many are not currently taking on apprentices as they do not understand the opportunities and feel they cannot spare the person to go to college. There is a need for apprenticeship provision in hospitality profitability and demand for a lower/mid-level supervisory into middle management apprenticeship covering knowledge and skills in managing people, front of house, housekeeping, financial management, kitchen/restaurant management etc., to build confident middle/senior/department managers. Intermediate/advanced use of IT for analysis is also required. There is interest in a practical housekeeping qualification (already in existence on the framework).

Businesses show real appetite for chef apprenticeships at Carlisle, where they currently train only to NVQ L3. As our food & drink offer grows in the north of Cumbria, including Michelin star restaurants, countywide coverage is needed as distance can be a barrier. The current route, with just 4 weeks on the job training, is not enough. The other FE colleges each offer at least 1 chef apprenticeship option.

To support the visitor economy as a career, rather than a stepping stone, there is a need to focus on increasing the number of degree apprenticeship opportunities in Cumbria.

To deliver appropriate apprenticeship provision, supporting current and future needs, and increase take-up by employers and participants, the outcomes employers are looking for are:

- Measures which support them to retain sufficient apprentices beyond the end of their training, and mean that they do not bear the cost of training for larger employers.
- Development of content not focused on the largest employers, using a more modular approach, including the flexibility needed by smaller employers in particular (especially in manufacturing).
- Easier recruitment of apprentices (particularly where the largest employers are vastly oversubscribed) and for it to be easier to find the right apprenticeship provision.
- More/more effective promotion of apprenticeship opportunities in schools.
- In the visitor economy, availability of apprenticeships (including degree apprenticeships) covering the roles highlighted above, to delivery models which work for employers.
- In construction increasing practical experience and addressing other issues in content.
- Options which enable rotation of learners between employers.

• 2.1.5 Engaging with Providers and Finding the Right Training

While there are some gaps/emerging gaps in provision and some content/delivery issues, employers are largely happy with available provision. The bigger issue is finding and accessing training effectively and efficiently, and increasing take-up. Some employers are engaging effectively with providers, others are struggling and don't find it easy, or are no longer trying. There are mixed views on some providers. Providers agree that although real progress has been made, communication and understanding both ways can be improved further.

Although in our Trailblazer survey most businesses said they do not need support finding the right training, in 1-2-1 discussions many report finding it difficult and overly time consuming, even where they employ HR/development professionals (also apparent from responses to other questions). Some are going out of county for training they could get locally. Care employers highlight lack of awareness of the available training and of opportunities for funding such as levy sharing.

There are issues of short termism, with examples of businesses asking for training reactively to short timescales, leaving insufficient time for providers to make it available (because of capacity issues or development time). Where TNA support has been available, e.g. through The Edge, those undertaken by providers have, understandably, been focused on the training they could deliver through that project rather than wider skills needs.

For CPD training in the land based sector the offer is highly complex and difficult to navigate, with delivery mostly by a combination of sixteen non-college based providers. To meet even one subsector's need, provision can comprise several independent organisations. We are currently reviewing the Work Force Development (WFD) service trialled through Cumbria Growth Hub, discussing with providers how we can best work together to develop a more effective offer, making it easier for employers, increasing take-up and enabling timely information to providers.

The Skills and Apprenticeship Hubs, developed through SDF1 and SDF2, are having a positive impact. There is however more to do on raising awareness of and use by employers, adding more providers/provider information and enhancing coordination where employers have a mix of needs. The planned Land & Nature Skills Service (LANSS) for Cumbria will further enhance this, bringing together the range of land based provision and linking with the Skills Hub.

Survey respondents indicated 5% as aware of Bootcamps and having used, 32% aware but not having used and 63% not aware. The most commonly sought topics were marketing/digital marketing/social media, customer service, project management and IT, with a wide range of other suggestions.

There is significant scope for increasing uptake by increasing awareness and understanding. 197 employers requested more information in our latest survey: 46% about Bootcamps, 46% apprenticeships, 35% other skills provision, 26% degree apprenticeships, 24% AFC/forces recruitment, 21% recruitment support through JCP, 19% Careers Hub/employer engagement with schools & colleges, 14% Disability Confident/support for employing people with disabilities and 11% levy sharing.

So that employers can find the training they need effectively and efficiently, which will also increase take-up in the county, outcomes sought by employers are:

- Mechanisms and support that make it easy to find and arrange the right training and understand the options and benefits without significant time consuming research.

Although not raised by employers, improved identification of training needs and more timely skills planning would support more effective investment and curriculum development and planning.

• 2.1.6 Curriculum Development and Fitness for Purpose

While our latest survey, and other research work indicates that employers are largely happy (with notable exceptions flagged elsewhere), not all are actively and effectively engaged with providers. This situation has though improved since we began work on the Trailblazer, supported by the work undertaken by providers through SDF1 and 2 and through the Trailblazer and this iteration of the LSIP.

Encouragingly 84% of survey respondents report currently available training as being fit for purpose. Of the 16% flagging issues these are: location 28%, timing 28%, content 34%, cost 36% and standard 15%. That said there is wider room for improvement and addressing these issues and opportunities would enhance the effectiveness of training and support increased take-up. Employers would value provision more bespoke to their needs and would be happy to work with providers to develop this.

Alongside accredited training and longer courses, businesses need short, sharp, focused and modular courses, which may (or may not) build into an accredited qualification and can be drawn from to put together qualifications which better fit employer needs. This is also valuable in facilitating retraining, upskilling and development of a more flexible workforce. For providers, a high level of flexibility can be challenging to ensure that provision is effective and affordable but there is substantial scope. In care, sourcing appropriate training in Cumbria appears to have improved since we undertook the Trailblazer research. Providers have begun to address gaps through SDF, although there continues to be scope and a need for further development. Westhouse, for example, have been working with Lakes College on Routeway to Care and believe there is potential to roll this out further. The majority of training needed is L2 with some L3 (where there is more complexity). There is also a need for CPD beyond L5. There is not a dedicated T level in social care for younger people. Staff shortages make it challenging for employers to release staff for training.

Although there is funding available through Skills for Care to pay for backfill, that backfill is often not available. There is not a provider in Cumbria licensed to deliver the Skills for Care leadership programme. National providers would come to the county to deliver this if there were sufficient cohort sizes, but equally there are opportunities for increased provision by local providers. Online training courses are reported as often of poor quality (impacting on staff skills) and present challenges for staff lacking digital skills.

Skills concerned with maximising profitability hospitality are highlighted as a critical need. This applies primarily to accommodation, food & beverage and front of house and covers running a profitable kitchen, a profitable bar, maximising covers, presenting the most profitable options, dealing with portion control/ food waste, budgeting, calculating profit and contribution, understanding direct costs and overheads and how a P&L works at department and organisational level. With staff shortages and high staff turnover there are not always the skills in-house to pass on and many general managers are time poor. These are essential skills for a hospitality professional, but it appears this training is not available in the format and modules required in Cumbria. Engagement indicates there would be a good take-up although colleges have experienced a volume issue in these topics, and in L3 Hospitality.

There are differing views about chef training locally, with applicability of syllabus, lack of up-to-date techniques and capability of working in the modern kitchen highlighted as issues. Fine dining training is good but there is a need for gastro pub and street food techniques. There is a need to train chefs to cope with multiple orders at one time and deal with portion control and costings. Some larger employers have developed their own programme(s) with FE colleges/private sector providers.

Cumbria Tourism are now working with providers to determine whether there is a need to develop new front of house/customer service provision bespoke to Cumbria or whether the latest Welcome Host offer is appropriate. Skills challenges in front of house/customer service are such that some employers are closing 1-2 days per week rather than compromise service quality. Employer feedback also highlights needs in conflict management, conference/events training and training for technical people (lighting, sound, etc.) in arts venues.

In land based, the breadth of skills needs in farming has significantly widened due to the shift in policy to focus on public goods provision and nature recovery and increasing need for business/diversification skills. Significantly more details on skills and gaps are provided in the underpinning Land Based Report, with a selection only highlighted in this report. This is a time of huge change in the sector, not least in agriculture, with a significant shift in thinking, understanding and skills required as a result. In farming most “entering” the industry are from farming families and so often entrenched in existing thinking and ways of working. So significant shifts are needed in many young people in schools and colleges as well as in the current workforce. If we cannot make this shift successfully there are significant implications for the visitor economy and more widely.

Land based employers identify that current and future technical content must include mitigating and adapting to climate change, grants and regulation and use of renewables. Agriculture specifically seeks SMART technologies, nature friendly farming and public goods provision & management. Forestry identify the Woodland Carbon Code, management of ancient and small farm woods, agroforestry, the multifunctional nature of forestry beyond timber production and use of large specialist machinery. Conservation employers recommend landscape scale management, soft skills for employees, the art of partnership working, and nature recovery knowhow (habitats and species). Horticulture needs to respond to climate change along with embracing new production techniques (without peat, under ‘glass’, and using robotics). Professional skills are needed for all areas of land based employment covering first line supervision, management and leadership, financial management, project development and project management.

Post 16, land based and allied sector training provision is complex, in terms of availability, location and provider, within and around the periphery of the county (and further afield). Since the demise of Newton Rigg, NR Training and Kendal College have both begun some land based delivery in the county, as have Ullswater Community College working with Myerscough. Myerscough now deliver a range of apprenticeships in the county, such as agriculture, arboriculture, animal, horticulture, greenkeeping and sportsturf at L2/L3. The L6 Professional Forester programme is starting at the University of Cumbria (UoC) this year, with L3 also starting. There are gaps at L0/1 for ECHP/SEND students and Level 1 for all subsectors. Despite a much improved position since the start of our Trailblazer activity, there are still many gaps in provision.

There is a clear and apparent gap in the quality, reliability and standards of climate change advice and training. Much of the activity is being delivered by voluntary organisations or microbusinesses. There is a lack of formalised training on sustainability which has generated a market for unregulated advice lacking appropriate standards. Cumbria will need to train its young people in all sectors in climate and environmental compliance and awareness and the professionals of the future who will support our drive towards Zero Carbon targets and maximise the effective multipurpose use of land.

Issues highlighted in manufacturing include the following:

- In our most recent research the need for welders has been flagged most frequently. Beyond this the most frequently mentioned gaps in are engineering, project management, electricians and skilled fitters.
- Employers generally say they need an agile and flexible workforce with training that supports that.
- Employers would value provision more bespoke to their needs with flexibility of options and are happy to work with providers to develop this. They report provision as, understandably, focused on the needs of the biggest employers. This applies in particular to engineering apprenticeships (and also project management) and in food & drink manufacture.

- Core mandatory modules with optional modules that employers/individuals can select from to suit their needs would be valuable.
- There is a need for courses that mix/enable transfers between mechanical and electronic engineering (apprenticeships). These and other translation courses are needed to help people move across to address skills shortages. A mixed mechanical/electronic engineering qualification is now becoming available, which providers are looking to offer (Maintenance and Operations Engineering Technician L3).
- Those where there is a small volume specialist requirement highlight lack of available courses locally, e.g. artisan manufacturers working with slate, specialist glassware and candles. While these are not large numbers of employees, the more artisan approach is an important part of Cumbria's offer as a county. It is a particular issue where there are ageing workforces. It is also evident in more mainstream manufacturing where there is a small volume requirement, e.g. print, but the mainstream manufacturers are able and happy to access the specialist training needed, often through their industry associations (LED lighting, paper, print, etc.).
- Businesses want people trained to the highest levels and new technologies and to know that trainers are bringing the most up-to-date industry knowledge.
- A small number of employers highlighted gaps around Six Sigma/lean/productivity. Given those who highlighted this, it is likely there would be more demand with more awareness and understanding, and this would impact positively on productivity.

Construction employers report:

- Additional technical/safety related subjects sought are loading & securing, plant/equipment tuition, earthworks and volumetrics, scaffolding inspection, abrasive wheels refresher, gas specific training, and a range of BTEC qualifications. Professional qualifications required are quantity surveying (apprenticeships), estimating and civil engineering.
- Cumbria aims to grow its energy sector and is well placed for potential new investments in Clean Energy (e.g. new nuclear, wind, hydrogen, solar, carbon capture and storage). Although major projects will involve large national supply chain organisations, the Cumbrian construction sector should see a growth in demand to support the associated developments and those large projects will place challenges on local businesses as they lose people to them.
- General shortages in employment and skills in both civils and engineering are exacerbated by the high demand for nationally significant construction projects. For example, HS2, new nuclear, etc.
- There is some criticism from employers of training content and/or techniques not being up to date and reports of differing levels of currency and appropriateness between providers.

Marketing, both traditional and digital, is highlighted as a key skills gap across sectors but especially in manufacturing and the visitor economy. It appears that part of the issue is claims of expertise by those with limited knowledge and experience. There is an opportunity to develop these skills in new entrants and existing staff to improve the population of trained staff, with the consequent improvement in business activity, by delivering additional provision and increasing take up of that already available, including the CIM accredited training available in the county.

Time out of the business for apprenticeships and other provision is highlighted as an issue across sectors, but especially in care, and 25% report this as having worsened due to the economic situation. For apprenticeships it is assignments as well as time with providers. There are issues with rurality and travel time, particularly in the heart of the Lake District. This has become more of an issue as businesses have a more limited capacity to cover with tighter staffing, exacerbated by recruitment problems (particularly for SMEs). A consistent theme is the challenge for small businesses to be able to support

the complexity and time demands of modern high quality apprenticeships. Employers would value provision that minimises time out of the business, while still providing the requisite quality of training (e.g. minimised travel time, focussed and effective off-the-job time).

So employers have the training available they need to reskill/upskill existing staff and for new staff to address current and forthcoming needs and opportunities, outcomes sought by employers are:

- Provision suited to their needs, with current content, including more flexible/modular options across the range of delivery and easy access to information on the range of provision. Many are happy to work actively with providers to develop that, and an increasing number do so already, but there is more to do on both engagement in development and awareness of what's available.
- Alongside accredited training and lengthy courses, businesses short, sharp, focused, and modular courses, which may (or may not) build over time into an accredited qualification and can be drawn from to put together qualifications which better fit their needs and facilitate retraining, upskilling and development of a more flexible workforce.
- Specific provision issues highlighted above addressed.

2.1.7 ICT, Digital and Data

ICT/digital is highlighted as a gap across the range of sectors, including among young people. This includes a general lack of appropriate skills for current activity and increasing digitalisation, ranging from basic skills to more complex and higher level, such as Sage, Excel, Word, coding/programming, graphic design, online marketing/social media. There is an emerging need for robust data and analytical skills. Without the requisite ICT skills businesses cannot adapt to and take advantage of emerging opportunities related to AI and more. The growing focus and need for cyber security for businesses to protect data and systems requires additional provision, with opportunities to build on (a small number of) existing strengths.

In construction, for example, digital adoption is an opportunity which can be supported through, for example, Bootcamps (digital leadership, coding, artificial intelligence, creative computing) and various CITB funded projects offering digital skills and training. There is an opportunity to highlight construction careers for learners on existing non-construction specific digital courses, and complement this with providers and employers discussing how existing courses can be modified to deliver construction relevant digital skills and new courses created – which would also be sensible in other sectors.

A range of employers in care highlight opportunities such as use of VR in end-of-life care (e.g. enabling people to visit places they have always wanted to go) and use of AI and other technology in dementia care. There can be challenges in trying to get staff to use digital reporting.

So the requisite digital skills are available for current needs and to enable them to improve productivity and make best use of future opportunities, outcomes sought by employers are:

- Staff at all levels and across most roles have appropriate basic business ICT skills, which they can further grow and adapt in line with emerging needs.
- Training for current staff and availability of a sufficient pool of new staff with skills such as coding, data and analysis, social media and digital marketing, cyber security and artificial intelligence.
- Understanding among young people and others already in the labour market of the way digital developments are transforming jobs, how digital skills can be applied in different sectors and the opportunities this opens up in work.

• 2.1.8 Leadership, Management and Business

While some report having found good leadership and management training, others struggle. To an extent this appears to be an issue of finding/funding the right training but there are issues of availability and curriculum. Management skills have a particular impact on productivity, flexibility and response to change. There is a need to ensure we are developing leaders and managers equipped to develop and run agile, flexible businesses, able to respond quickly and effectively to changing landscapes and opportunities. Cumbria is home to a range of leadership and management providers, including world leading offers, but take-up by Cumbrian businesses is generally low, for a range of reasons (such as cost and awareness).

As highlighted in 2.6 above there is a particular need for enhanced leadership and management skills in land based, not least in agriculture to enable farmers to cope with the tremendous change and challenges of the move of focus from food production at all costs to nature and conservation outcomes and challenges of funding changes and diversification.

In care, registered managers completing Level 5 Leadership & Management are asking “what next?”

In the visitor economy employers would value a middle/senior management development programme to support staff as they progress through the business and aid retention, helping staff acquire supervisory/management skills covering people, finance, operations, sales, marketing, IT, systems, business growth/change and determining/increasing profitability. Some larger employers have developed their own programmes, delivered in-house or supported by an external provider. The Chartered Management qualification has been successful but there is poor awareness in the industry. A shorter timeframe (12 not 24 months) and modules that can be accessed over time would be helpful.

To enable businesses to address the current and emerging challenges and opportunities, change and operate flexibly, outcomes sought by employers are:

- Leadership & management training with a focus on flexibility and change.
- Land based specialist training.
- Care beyond Level 5.
- Specialist delivery for the visitor economy as above, including hospitality profitability.

• 2.1.9 Cost of Training

While 25% fund training themselves, 34% quote cost/availability of finances as a barrier. When asked about the effect of the economic situation 34% say they have less money to spend on training. There appears to be low usage of funded training in the care sector in Cumbria, of particular concern when 47% cite cost of training as a barrier. For example, there is little take-up of Skills for Care funded training compared with other areas. This could be addressed through a concerted campaign to sign care businesses up to the Skills for Care Dataset, enabling more to access this funding.

In land based, lack of availability of impartial information is a barrier to appreciating value for money and enabling fully informed decisions. Self-funding new entrants and upskillers cite a particular issue over being able to make an informed decision on all options. Unaccredited and new programmes have little or no evidence to demonstrate value e.g. carbon auditing.

To support them in accessing the training they need and want, outcomes sought by employers are:

- Training viewed by them as affordable and value for money, supported where needed by impartial advice.

• 2.1.10 Low Carbon, Net Zero and Energy Transition

Energy and low carbon transition are increasingly placing new demands on businesses (across the range of sectors) and households to understand their energy provision alternatives, their carbon footprint and how to become more energy and carbon efficient. There is a growing need for competent advice and delivery/installation of new equipment focused on energy/carbon efficiency including: energy efficiency, insulation standards, heat pumps, hydrogen boilers, solar panels etc. There is also a growing need for electric vehicle maintenance. Skills requirements range from understanding of the opportunities, how to review/assess, auditing and management to the range of implementation and maintenance skills.

Opportunities in land based include micro-renewables and more. There will be a need for more technicians and professional advisors who appreciate multifunctionality in land management (not just large scale anaerobic digesters or large field scale solar arrays or wind farms, rather a wind turbine on every farm).

Retrofit will become a more important area for construction moving forward, with increasing demand as demand for services increases and more businesses recognise the opportunity. There is an emerging need, e.g. to retrain gas heating engineers/plumbers and to attract new talent.

To enable businesses to support the needs and opportunities in this field, outcomes employers are:

- Appropriately skilled staff, although in many cases the demand is not yet there from employers who are busy with traditional opportunities and not yet focusing on these emerging opportunities.

• 2.1.11 Energy – A Growth Sector

Cumbria's Clean Energy Strategy sets out a bold vision for Cumbria to become 'the UK's natural capital for clean energy generation'. With the UK's net zero targets depending largely on the country's ability to deliver a decarbonised supply of energy, Cumbria has a fantastic opportunity to build on its natural assets and track record to make a major contribution. By 2040 it is hoped that clean energy will generate 9GW of energy in Cumbria, supporting 13,000 jobs. In accordance with that strategy, the scope of clean energy technologies reviewed incorporates: new nuclear developments; carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) and hydrogen production; renewable energy, mainly wind and solar photovoltaics; network storage and grid upgrades.

Our workforce, skilled in engineering and energy-related activities, offers a key competitive edge but the scale, scope and timing of employer skill needs in relation to clean energy are largely unclear to date. We anticipate that employer skills needs in relation to clean energy will rise in the latter part of this decade via extensive and long-lasting construction and installation activities. From the early 2030s, this gradually changes as projects move more into operational mode, with smaller workforces but locally resident staff (rather than a more transient construction workforce) over a much longer period.

There are very few clean energy projects, outside offshore wind, where there is a moderate to high degree of confidence plans will come to fruition and there remains considerable uncertainty about both the scale and timing of clean energy activity within Cumbria. To adopt a wait and see approach in relation to skills however risks us missing a great opportunity. So we need to begin now to build the partnerships, infrastructure and enhancements to the local skills base. In addition there are significant lead times in engaging young people at all stages of education in working towards these opportunities and in training to the required standard for some roles (e.g. 4 years+ for specialised welders).

Understanding of likely workforce implications is very variable. Nuclear has the best visibility of likely future skills needs via NSSG modelling and active industry engagement. But even here, there is great uncertainty about the scale and timing of future activity such that no geographic breakdown of NSSG's future workforce model is possible. Sub-sectors like CCUS and hydrogen appear to have limited information about occupational skill requirements at this stage and even less understanding of the likely scale of demand, although we are continuing to work with employers on this. Within all forms of clean energy, the largest labour requirement will be in the construction phase. The scale of workforce skill requirements at operational stage is likely to be, in almost all cases, relatively small.

Interviews with employers and other key stakeholders indicate:

- Few potential opportunities stand a strong chance of proceeding in the next five years. Most activity, if it occurs, will take place well after 2030. Uncertainty over scale and timing means that industry/provider links are less developed in new technologies than in nuclear.
- We need to retain our strong foundation of engineering skills, especially in roles such as welding (L3/4), electrical engineering (L3/6), engineering maintenance (L3), mechanical engineering (L3/6) so people are better placed to upgrade/adapt their skills to new clean energy technologies.
- It would be valuable if employers working in clean energy formed a consortium/cluster, working closely together to articulate skills needs, brigade occupation and workforce development demand and work with providers to shape education and training delivery.
- Skills demands created by the operational phase of many clean energy projects are likely to be lower in volume than existing energy technologies. Operational workforce headcounts within existing, smaller scale projects appear very low. For example, developers of solar PV farms say that only monthly maintenance visits will be required post-construction and the Carlton Power hydrogen plan for Barrow will create only 10 permanent jobs once operational. Nuclear SMRs appear to offer the prospect of a significant ongoing labour requirement, though there is potential to generate more demand via upgrades to the electric grid, CCUS and hydrogen developments.
- More bite-sized, modular training provision may be required to allow existing workers to upgrade and adapt their skills, such as in welding for hydrogen and wind.
- There is concern over the level of local learner interest in clean energy careers. Given ongoing high levels of skilled labour demand from BAE and Sellafield, any further growth in demand from new forms of clean energy could result in employers facing significant skills shortages when recruiting.
- Providers face significant and seemingly growing barriers to recruiting and retaining staff with the specialist skills required, with those with relevant skills able to earn more in industry. This is likely to intensify as new clean energy projects come onstream.
- There may be a need for providers to engage with the manufacturers of the key technologies that will be deployed to help ensure that local providers understand and can operate the critical infrastructure for clean energy, potentially engaging manufacturers (many of which are based overseas) in the development and delivery of relevant training.

We have undertaken a specific deep dive into offshore wind. Cumbria contributes approximately 1.7GW of wind generation across both on-shore and off-shore technologies, some 16% of UK wind generation. To date the capability supporting those installations comprises mainly Operations and Maintenance delivered from two of Cumbria's ports, Workington and Barrow. Our ambition is to grow wind generating capacity in line with the growth of the UK wind sector to maintain our proportion of UK generation. Currently there are 536 Cumbrians working in the OSW sector.

There are opportunities for Cumbrian firms to supply OSW nationally and globally. Supporting businesses that want to supply the OSW supply chain in planning, manufacturing or erection will help create or safeguard jobs (if firms are diversifying slightly from supplying Sellafield or BAE they will be less prone

to occasional drops in demand from these supply chains, making all Cumbrian supply chains more economically sustainable). RTC North is prepared to do business diagnostics if firms are considering supplying the OSW sector. These will require mainly higher-level skills and would have an impact immediately on clusters such as Ulverston, Barrow, Sellafield and Carlisle.

The development of Morgan, Mona and Morecambe (MM&M) will lead to some subcontracting opportunities for the assembly, construction, and installation stage from 2027 to 2029. It is likely that these jobs will be focused on Barrow and Workington and skills required will range from unskilled warehouse to highly skilled specialist managers. In addition to the direct jobs there will be 402 indirect jobs created that will be spread across the OSW supply chain. Operations and maintenance of MM&M will probably be based in Barrow and will be there from 2029 to 2054. There will be around 116 additional full-time roles from unskilled to highly qualified professionals. Support services for MM&M should provide around 137 jobs from 2024 to 2054. Not all of these will come to Cumbria, but if the colleges can provide training for OSW then potentially Cumbria could create training/education jobs that support the national OSW sector. Furness College is already delivering apprenticeships for ORSTED and Lakes College provides SCADA training. The UoC delivers Project Management Higher Apprenticeships, and its new Furness Campus is in advanced plans of delivering courses for Siemens.

So that they can take advantage of current and emerging opportunities, outcomes sought by employers in relation to clean energy are:

- Availability of sufficient appropriately skilled staff in the volumes required when needed.
- Modular training to enable re/upskilling of current staff and to meet the needs of clean energy.

2.1.12 Future Skills and What the Future Looks Like

To better understand skills needs and opportunities for the future, employers need a better understanding of the opportunities and the future more widely, how they could take advantage of these and the skills needed for this. Manufacturers, for instance, report struggling to be clear on what the future looks like and then translating this into clear future skills needs, around e.g. VR and robotics and how these can be used, digitalisation, new materials, etc. There appear to be opportunities to strengthen linkages between Catapults and businesses. Topics also include e.g. operating in a virtual environment (beyond meetings) i.e virtual working environments, technology transfer, problem solving, etc.

Outcomes sought by employers are:

- Enhanced understanding of the opportunities available to them moving forward and what this means in terms of skills needs as a first step to them working with the providers on development of relevant provision.

2.2 Employer Needs and Actionable Priorities

Key elements only are summarised here (see 3.1 below for further information). As well as mainstream funding and AEB, options include LSIF, Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), Skills for Care, CITB Industry Impact Fund, Life Long Learning Entitlement and employers:

| Employer Needs | Actionable Priorities |
|---|---|
| Recruitment: | |
| Recruitment of skilled staff and staff to be trained is a significant issue across all sectors, roles and levels. | Continue and develop further support initiatives, coordinated through the Careers Hub, to enhance careers activities in schools and colleges with action by ERBs to engage more businesses in these. Promote initiatives and support around wider pools of employees (service leavers, offenders/ex-offenders, people with disabilities, etc). Additional Bootcamp activity. Consider opportunities through SPF. |
| There is a specific need for more chefs, at every level. | Train more chefs countywide. Introduce chef apprenticeship at Carlisle College at L3. |
| There is a specific need for front of house/customer service staff in the visitor economy. | Cumbria Tourism and providers considering specific initiatives through SPF and Bootcamps. See also Curriculum Development and Apprenticeships. |
| There is a severe shortage of care staff. | Providers to consider specific initiatives through SPF and Bootcamps and see Apprenticeships and Curriculum Development below. |
| Employers flag particular requirements for welders, also engineering, project managers, electrical & skilled fitters. | Train more people in these roles countywide through existing provision. LSIP to undertake further work to check levels and specialisms in welding. |
| There is a recruitment issue for land based operatives. | Develop Bootcamp style intensive reskilling/upskilling programmes for land based operatives L2-3 |
| Basic and Functional Skills: | |
| There are some issues in levels of basic and functional skill, and these also limit staff progression. | Providers to ensure availability of appropriate L1 and L2 provision. Stakeholders to enhance and promote provision such as Multiply and AEB, including additional promotion by ERBs. Providers to consider Multiply type provision for literacy and ICT, looking at funding options such as SPF and Bootcamps. Consider specific farming ICT support through SPF (with The Farmer Network), and care specific. |
| Employee Behaviours and Emotional Intelligence (Employability Skills): | |
| There are significant issues across the range of skills, exacerbated by Covid, with particular challenges in young people, including resilience. | Building on actions with the Careers Hub and working with the Apprenticeship Strategy, employers to work with schools and colleges to help build these skills appropriately into the curriculum throughout. Stakeholders to seek funding/sponsorship to pilot/roll out potential solutions e.g. C4LP initiatives. |
| Apprenticeships: | |
| There is a need for more skilled staff and retention of young people in the county across the range of topics and sectors. There are opportunities for increased use of apprenticeships with easier access to information for employers (and potential apprentices), easier recruitment and more use of levy sharing. | Further increase the use of apprenticeships, including further development of the SDF Apprenticeship Hub to include more providers and ideally vacancy and candidate sharing. ERBs, providers, Careers Hub and other stakeholders to work together to support recruitment, promotion and engagement (see Recruitment). ERBs and providers to promote levy sharing and Apprenticeship Hub. Use of Careers Hub LMI to promote to young people and parents. Work with Apprenticeship Strategy. |

| Employer Needs | Actionable Priorities |
|---|---|
| There are a range of recruitment and skills challenges in the visitor economy including chefs, housekeeping, front of house/customer service and management/profitability. | Promote and increase use of apprenticeships in the visitor economy. Introduce chef apprenticeship at Carlisle College L3, subject to confirmation of demand. Cumbria Tourism and providers to conclude review and agree Welcome Host customer service now suitable or develop bespoke provision. Cumbria Tourism and UoC to promote the new Tourism Degree Apprenticeship through the Tourism Talent Hub and UCAS. |
| There remain significant gaps in land based provision. | See Curriculum development below. |
| There are significant staffing & skills issues in care and particular issues with time off-the-job given staffing shortages. | Providers to continue to develop appropriate care provision in the county (as started under SDF), including options such as L2 care apprenticeship. |
| Engaging with Providers and Finding the Right Training: | |
| Although the situation has improved significantly, employers continue to struggle with engaging with providers and finding the right training. | Further development of SDF Skills Hub by providers. Chamber to implement Workforce Development Service (using SPF). LANSS implementation (funding package partly agreed and other bids to be submitted). Enhanced promotion and engagement by ERBs and providers. LSIP engagement/discussion sessions quarterly run by ERBs. |
| Curriculum Development and Fitness for Purpose: | |
| Short, sharp and modular options. | Including e.g. Maintenance and operation engineering technician. Building on modular model of BAE supply chain with UoC. Core and optional elements for F&D, construction, manufacturing. |
| In construction there remain issues with inclusion as a requirement content that is not relevant to significant numbers of employers (e.g. staircases in joinery). | CITB, Housebuilders Federation and providers to continue to review construction provision and build on what has already been achieved through SPF, including consideration of modular/flexible options. |
| In manufacturing there is a need for modular & flexible offers, including provision enabling transfer between mechanical and electronic engineering. There is also some demand for six sigma/lean/productivity, which would support productivity improvement. | Providers continuing development and implementation of modular offers and courses which mix/enable transfer between mechanical and electronic engineering, and will consider other translation/mixed courses as needed. E.g. mixed qualification combining mechanical and electronic is now becoming available (Maintenance & Operations Engineering Technician, L3). LSIP to check current provision of Six Sigma/Lean/productivity, including discussion with the Lean Forum and then work with providers to look at opportunities for provision if/where there are gaps. |
| There are a range of gaps in care provision from entry level to management. | Building on what has been achieved through SDF, providers to consider further L2 & L3 plus CPD beyond L5, and expand Routeway to Social Care. Consider opportunities for a Bootcamp approach including manual handling, first aid etc and a T level in social care. |
| In the visitor economy there is a need for Hospitality Management & Profitability (various levels), a wider range of chefs skills (e.g. gastropub, street food) and a need for front of house/customer service and housekeeping provision. | See Apprenticeships above. Add a wider range of chef skills to provision where appropriate. Consider options such as moving trainers to students, using employer facilities and larger employers sharing access to their programmes Introduce housekeeping 2 day course with guaranteed interview at the end. |

| Employer Needs | Actionable Priorities |
|---|--|
| <i>Land based: (see also table 7 in underpinning report)</i> | |
| There is a need for generic skills across land based including soft skills, business and financial acumen, L5 supervisory & management managing contracting business & land management advice. | Adopt/adapt LANTRA L5. Develop appropriate short programmes for land management advice and public/ community engagement (L5-7). |
| There is a need for skills to tackle climate change across the range of climate change issues and including e.g. adaptation/mitigation, carbon offsetting, practical peat restoration, practical tree establishment and integrating climate issues into all programmes. | Providers to consider specific initiatives through SPF and Bootcamps and see Apprenticeships and Curriculum Development below. |
| There is a need for skills to improve productivity and efficiency in farming e.g. smarter farming (robotics, genetics, drones, GPS etc), climate adapted farm management, nature friendly productive systems, sustainable growing, diversification, carbon audit and action planning and addressing succession, plus a specific focus on hard to reach farmers. | Develop L4-7 smarter farming (modular), and short courses in climate adapted farm management L4-7, nature friendly production L5-7, sustainable growing L4-7, diversification, L4-5 and carbon L5-7. Bootcamp/network approach covering a fundamentals across topics for hard to reach famers L2. |
| There is a need for skills to support delivery of the England Tree Action Plan across the range of forestry topics L1-7. | Develop L1 forest/woodland operative modular & short courses (agroforestry, farm woodland, wood pasture), short courses in disease management L4-7, multifunctional forestry L5-7, awareness to other land managers L5-7, woodland creation for non foresters L1, use/maintenance of large forest equipment L3-4, encouraging adoption of Forest Training Fund L2-4, better management of current resource L2-3. Deliver existing L3 forest operative & L6 professional forester apprenticeships. |
| There is a need for skills development to address the Natural Capital agenda, Lawton Review and nature recovery. | Develop short courses in engaging with government support programmes L5, promoting natural capital/ nature recovery L5-7, green financing L5-7, farming with nature L4-7, managing peatland sites L4-7, power driven machinery in nature conservation L3-4, partnership working L5-7, coastal & seascape management L5-7, river/water supply/flood management L5-7. |
| There are a range of sub-sectoral skills gaps which need addressing. | Develop short courses in e.g. on-farm non-farm diversification L4-5, data gathering handling & interpretation L4-5, environmental chemistry/analysis L4-5, climate change adaptation L4-5, , heritage industry L3-5, water supply industry L3-5. And modular in sustainability L5-7. Develop apprenticeship L4-5 in advanced agricultural engineering (robotics etc). Increase promotion of apprenticeships in game and equine L2-5. Establish better continuation continuity and CPD routes in outdoor recreation L4. |
| There is a need and opportunity to enhance the experience and opportunities for SEND EHCP students. | Develop land based L0 programme with hand tools only. |
| Marketing and digital marketing. | Stakeholders to increase awareness of available provision at all levels e.g. through NESMA, Bootcamps, short courses. Providers/LSIP to review for any gaps/emerging gaps. |

| Employer Needs | Actionable Priorities |
|--|--|
| IT/digital/data: | |
| General gaps in business IT skills e.g. Sage, Excel, Word, online marketing and social media, graphic design. | Providers to explore opportunities for shared provision. LSIP to draw together a group of employers, specialists and providers to further review requirements. Providers to consider how the care sector can best be supported. |
| Lack of awareness in employees/ potential employees of digital opportunities. | Promote and encourage people to understand the increasing digital content of and opportunities in the range of sectors. |
| Leadership, Management and Business: | |
| General. | Stakeholders to further review what is available and address gaps, including working together to ensure courses at all levels and across sectors include sufficient focus on flexibility and ability to manage/lead change. LSIP to work with business support delivery on support through SPF. ERBs to promote Lancaster/UoC Senior Leadership Apprenticeship and cohort options. |
| Hospitality management/profitability. | See curriculum above. |
| Land based. | CPD through networking/groups e.g. Farmer Network. Providers to look to adopt available models e.g. LANTRA L5 Leadership & Management. |
| Care. | Providers to look at opportunities for CPD beyond L5. Stakeholders to develop appropriate options e.g. specific cohorts of Lancaster/UoC Senior Leaders Apprenticeship. |
| Cost of Training: | |
| There is an issue for some with affordability/perceived affordability of training. | Providers and employers to explore potential cost reductions. ERBs and providers to further promote levy sharing. WFD to develop cohorts. Promotional activity by ERBs/providers explaining value for money. Chamber to encourage/support employer sign-up to Skills for Care dataset. |
| Low Carbon, Net Zero and Energy Transition: | |
| There are issues in skills and understanding in businesses around opportunities, issues and solutions. | Increase take-up of available training e.g. through Lakes College Retrofit Academy. Consider further development requirements/opportunities. |
| Retrofit skills in construction especially heating engineers and plumbers. | CPD through networking/groups e.g. Farmer Network. Providers to look to adopt available models e.g. LANTRA L5 Leadership & Management. |
| There are a significant range of skills gaps across the whole land based sector as highlighted elsewhere and detailed in the underpinning Land based Report. | Providers, ERBs, employers and LANSS to work together to fill gaps by adopting training programmes already developed/accredited elsewhere (e.g. SRUC's Peatland Restoration course) and, where there is no current provision, develop bespoke training programmes (see 3.1.10 below). |

| Employer Needs | Actionable Priorities |
|---|--|
| Energy – A Growth Sector: | |
| <p>There is a need to ensure the availability of the staff and skills required for the construction and installation phase of new developments.</p> | <p>In addition to recruitment actions above, civil engineers L6 (full time HE and apprenticeships available already at Lakes College); civil engineering technician L3 (via apprenticeships or T levels, available at Gen2), construction site supervisors L4 (apprenticeships and short courses – local provision to be developed), construction site managers L6 (apprenticeships, local provision to be developed), quantity surveyors (L6 (fulltime HE or apprenticeship, local provision to be developed), engineering and construction riggers and erectors L3 (apprenticeships, local provision to be developed), installation electrician and maintenance electrician L3 (apprenticeship, available at Gen2, JTL and the 4 FE colleges), scaffolders L2 (apprenticeship and full time FE, available at Lakes College).</p> |
| <p>There is a need to ensure the availability of the staff and skills required for the operational phase of new developments.</p> | <p>In addition to recruitment actions above, electrical engineer L6 (T levels available at Kendal and Lakes Colleges, then full time HE, available at Furness and Lakes Colleges), mechanical engineers L6 (full time HE and apprenticeships, BEng available at Furness College), maintenance and operations engineering L3 (apprenticeship, available at Gen2 and Furness and Carlisle Colleges), engineering technicians L3/4 (apprenticeship, available at BAE, Gen2 and Lakes College, and 16-19 fulltime FE and HNC, available at Carlisle and Kendal Colleges for the HNC), pipe and plate welders L3 (upgrading via short courses, possibly also apprenticeships, AEB available via Furness College, apprenticeship available via Furness, Lakes and Gen2), engineering fitters L3 (apprenticeship, available at Gen2 Furness and Lakes), engineering design and draughtspersons L3 (apprenticeships, available at BAE and Gen2), project controls technician L3 (apprenticeship, available at Lakes), project controls professional L6 (apprenticeship and short courses, requires development). The Offshore Wind report also details additional opportunities, primarily for transferable skills/common to other clean energy.</p> |
| Future Skills and What the Future Looks Like: | |
| <p>There is a need to develop a range of future skills but employers (and providers) struggle with understanding what the future could look like and therefore future skills.</p> | <p>Stakeholders to arrange initial event(s) and communications campaign to highlight and start exploring future developments/opportunities, supported by those employers with a clearer view of the future and covering the range of sectors. ERBs to improve engagement between Catapults and businesses and link more businesses with universities, KTPs, etc. Chamber to draw together a group of employers, providers and specialists to review requirements and opportunities around provision of data and analysis skills, and agree further actions/recommendations. Stakeholders to work with InnovateUK to establish innovation centres and potentially a Catapult.</p> |

PART 3 DELIVERING THE LSIP PRIORITIES

3.1 Actions

The key specific actions we intend to undertake, or have already started on, are set out below.

Supporting this report is an updated and detailed Priorities, Issues, Opportunities and Actions document, building on that produced for and annexed in our Trailblazer report. This is a living document which we update for actions/changes and progress on an ongoing basis and share through our LSIP web page. It includes further detail, actions and timescales and provides a useful vehicle for measuring and monitoring progress.

In line with LSIP guidance the focus here is on actions which can be taken by providers and other stakeholders locally. Where issues and opportunities require action by DfE or others they are being addressed separately through the appropriate channels.

3.1.1 Recruitment

Actions to encourage more young people into apprenticeships, other appropriate pathways, gaps and opportunities are:

- ERBs will continue to do more to encourage employers to work with the Careers Hub and other stakeholders (e.g. Inspira and Centre for Leadership Performance (C4LP)) on careers and employability skills, coordinated through the Careers Hub. Activities include, e.g. business placements for careers staff (Teacher Encounter Project); school visits; videos; works experience; working together to build work situations and opportunities into the curriculum; signing up to the Careers Hub employers' pledge to engage with young people; communicating with their workforces (as parents/influencers); Hello Futures/Our Future Campaign; health & social care secondary schools project; U-Explore platform; task & finish groups on parental engagement, works experience, etc.; using CITB tools and resources (e.g. Go Construct, Talentview Construction and Go Construct STEM Ambassadors); opportunities such as C4LP's Sense of Purpose and the Power On book created by nuclear graduates; Furness College After School Trades sessions.
- The Growth Hub will include information on engagement opportunities through the Careers Hub and more widely as part of Social Value in its supply chain resources.

To encourage use of wider employment pools actions are:

- Chamber (as a Disability Confident Leader), other Disability Confident organisations and JCP to continue and do more to encourage and support more employers to actively recruit more people with disabilities and long term health conditions, and sign up to Disability Confident. This includes use of inclusive recruitment processes and effective support mechanisms once in work.
- ERBs to promote opportunities and examples of successful engagement with initiatives such as Inclusion@Work project (training and employment for people with autism).
- Chamber and other stakeholders signed up the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) to continue and do more to promote the benefits of signing up to the AFC, employing service leavers and using the Career Transition Partnership recruitment service.
- ERBs to continue and do more to promote opportunities through employing prisoners/ex-offenders and encourage engagement with initiatives/services supporting this, including work with HMP Haverigg Employment Advisory Board.

- ERBs to continue and do more to promote and encourage employer engagement with JCP services.
- All stakeholders to continue to promote Bootcamps, and LSIP to continue to feed in intelligence to support topics and design and providers to continue to expand/extend.

Other:

- Cumbria Tourism and UoC building a pool of job opportunities, Trainee Manager or similar, with businesses offering their new employee a Degree Apprenticeship. These opportunities will sit under the Tourism Talent Hub and UCAS.
- Stakeholders will continue to actively support initiatives such as the Employment Working Group and the employer-led group in Furness.
- Organisations such as Inspira, Building Better Opportunities and Barrow Adult Learning to continue to work on ways to break down barriers and offer training for the visitor economy, working with Cumbria Tourism's Talent Hub on 2 day training courses with guaranteed interviews.

This will be measured and monitored through: numbers of employers actively engaged; future research responses from employers, providers and schools; Careers Hub feedback; examples of ERB communications; supply chain resources; referrals number; sign ups to Disability Confident; sign ups to AFC; feedback from JCP on take-up of support, additional Bootcamp activity.

3.1.2 Basic and Functional Skills

In addition to Careers Hub and employer engagement activities highlighted above (including promoting the AEB offer), actions are:

- Stakeholders to seek funding/sponsorship to pilot and deliver solutions such as C4LP initiatives.
- Providers to ensure availability of appropriate L1 and L2 provision.
- ERBs to engage employers to work also with the Careers Hub, schools and colleges to build work situations and basic/functional skills into the curriculum more effectively.
- LSIP to inform and support implementation of Multiply (e.g. suggesting and supporting appropriate work related scenarios and engaging employers). Providers to consider opportunities for similar approaches to literacy and ICT. LSIP to similarly support Bootcamps.
- Providers to work with employers to develop appropriate basic ICT provision for care staff.

We will measure this through e.g. future research responses, number of employers engaged and examples of activity, initiatives piloted, initiatives rolled out.

3.1.3 Employee Behaviours and Emotional Intelligence (Employability Skills)

In addition to Careers Hub and employer engagement activities highlighted above actions are:

- Stakeholders to seek funding/sponsorship to pilot and delivery solutions such as C4LP initiatives.
- ERBs to engage employers to work also with the Careers Hub, schools and colleges to build work situations and employability skills into the curriculum more effectively.
- LSIP to work collaboratively with Cumbria's Apprenticeship Strategy, which also seeks to address work preparedness, employability skills and resilience.

We will measure this through e.g. future research responses, number of employers engaged and examples of activity, initiatives piloted, initiatives rolled out.

3.1.4 Apprenticeships

We will work collaboratively with Cumbria's Apprenticeship Strategy, on the actions below and supporting additional actions highlighted in that strategy.

Actions to support ease of access to information and provision are:

- Careers Hub activities (see 3.1.1 Recruitment).
- SDF consortium to further develop and promote the Apprenticeship Hub providing easy access to information and support on the range of apprenticeships, use of levy, etc.
- ERBs and other stakeholders to do more to promote the Apprenticeship Hub and information around apprenticeships, including opportunities to access unspent levies, supported by providers.
- The planned roll out of CITB's New Entrant Support Team.

Actions to support vacancy and candidate sharing are:

- LSIP and SDF consortium to explore opportunities for including vacancy and candidate sharing in Apprenticeship Hub services, and work with the larger employers, who are generally over-subscribed, on vacancy sharing (e.g. BAE Systems, Sellafield).
- Use of the Careers Hub LMI Platform for young people and parents to promote technical and vocational qualifications.

Actions to further develop provision are:

- Employers, providers and ERBs to continue discussions through e.g. round tables and ongoing sector focus groups, supported by ERB-led research, including exploring opportunities for shared apprenticeships and working with food & drink producers and others on flexibility of content.
- Cumbria Tourism to continue to work with providers to develop apprenticeship provision in hospitality profitability and middle/senior management provision at various levels.
- Carlisle College to introduce chef apprenticeship L3, subject to confirmation of demand.
- LSIP to undertake further research with employers and providers on how to improve completions and with employers on retention post-apprenticeship.
- Providers to ensure appropriate pre-information for learners.
- Providers to continue development of a comprehensive apprenticeship curriculum/offer for farming.
- Continue to develop appropriate care provision (begun under SDF) working between providers, employers and Skills for Care and promote/provide options which do not require off the job training e.g. L2 care apprenticeships does not require foundation skills (often an issue for older workers) and does not have a 20% off the job requirement.
- Chamber and providers to provide case studies of good practice in care on use of apprenticeships to support recruitment and pathways e.g. Risedale.

We will measure this through: extension of Apprenticeship Hub to wider providers, number of employers actively engaged with Apprenticeship Hub, examples of activity, future research responses, examples of ERB communications, extension of Apprenticeship Hub services, further research completed, provision amended, provision introduced, apprenticeship completion rate.

3.1.5 Engaging with Providers and Finding the Right Training

Actions to facilitate easier access to information and training and related services for employers and enhance engagement between employers and providers and encourage take-up are:

- SDF consortium to continue to develop and enhance the Skills and Apprenticeship Hubs, introduced in SDF1 and further developed through SDF2, including widening to further providers and linking with

CITB, Skills for Care and the Visitor Economy Talent Hub.

- LANSS team to continue implementation of LANSS and link this with the Skills Hub above.
- Chamber to complete review of the WFD service pilot, working with providers, to implement a refreshed model, supported through SPF/the Growth Hub, which will work with the Skills Hub. It will include helping businesses to undertake effective workforce/skills needs planning, bringing delivery cohorts together, facilitating bespoke options and helping businesses find and access appropriate packages of support (including through existing Adult Education delivery), with the added benefit of more timely information to providers.
- SDF consortium to look to further develop the Apprenticeship Hub to include vacancy and candidate sharing.
- Enhanced engagement between Skills for Care and providers, with development of further provision in the county (building on that developed through SDF).
- LSIP to engage more providers to engage with Skills for Care and complete their dataset.
- ERBs and business support providers to do more to promote the Skills Hub and engage employers in working with the Hub and wider providers (through WBLPF). This will include promotion and linkage between the Skills Hub and Cumbria Business Growth Hub websites.
- ERBs working with providers and other stakeholders to implement targeted and ongoing campaigns to communicate with employers and help build awareness and understanding of the opportunities and benefits, available training and other support (such as JCP) and how to access.
- Chamber to continue the LSIP Insight quarterly e-newsletter (covering LSIP progress, good news stories, training/development opportunities, JCP support, etc), further widening distribution.
- LSIP to continue to engage referrals through research activities.
- LSIP to work with the CITB Employer Network Pilot on empowering construction employers to determine their local skills needs.

This will be measured through: future research responses, evidence of ERB/Skills Hub engagement, further extension of Skills Hub to wider providers, WFD review report and service implementation, sign-ups to Skills for Care dataset.

3.1.6 Curriculum Development and Fitness for Purpose

Actions are:

- ERBs to continue with the employer/provider groups established and establish others as appropriate, supported by ongoing pre and post research and engagement with wider employers, to design and implement appropriate training and review/develop provision on an ongoing basis. In development we will look to build on the power of provider/employer joint initiatives e.g. Simon Rogan/Kendal College in hospitality and Morgan Sindall/Lakes College Civils Training Centre.
- Through the above, identify how/which modules could be used for short and modular provision and what needs to be developed. Providers to continue to develop modular provision. This includes exploring opportunities for using the BAE/UoC modular supply chain model for other topics, working with awarding bodies and translation/mixed courses to support re/upskilling similar to the mixed qualification combining mechanical and electronic (Maintenance & Operations Engineering Technician).
- Set up a work group to investigate and implement opportunities for more onsite/digital delivery and other opportunities for reducing class-based training, including looking at remote access via other providers, enabling groups to work together in-person and addressing IT access issues.
- Employers and providers to engage to consider potential backfill opportunities.
- CITB and House Builders Federation to continue to engage with providers to review and further

develop construction provision, building on what has already been achieved through SDF and drawing on HBF resources (free materials, masterclasses, etc).

- LSIP to check current provision of Six Sigma/Lean/productivity, including discussion with the Lean Forum, then work with providers to look at opportunities for provision if/where there are gaps.
- Consider opportunities for a Bootcamp approach in care (including Care Certificate plus e.g. manual handling and first aid); extending Lakes College's Routeway to Care; social care T level.
- In the visitor economy, Cumbria Tourism to work with providers and employers on:
 - Development of training and qualifications to suit industry including, for chefs, introduction of gastro pub, street food, coping with multiple orders, portion control and costings.
 - Development and implementation of a 2 day housekeeping course, with guaranteed interview.
 - Increasing modularity so employers can select the right mixture of subjects.
 - Blended learning, moving trainers to students, using employer facilities, etc.
 - Opportunities for more experience through large employers sharing access to their programmes with smaller ones.
 - Determining whether there is a need to develop new front of house/customer service provision bespoke to Cumbria or whether the latest Welcome Host offer is now appropriate.
 - Training on conferences/events and for technical people in venues (lighting, sound etc).
- Providers, ERBs and employers to work together to fill the training gaps identified in land based through adopting training programmes already developed and accredited elsewhere (see 3.1.8 and the detailed land based report) and where needed developing bespoke training programmes to cover the detailed requirements within developing generic skills for land based, tackling climate change, improving productivity and efficiency in farming, supporting delivery of the England Tree Action Plan, addressing natural capital/Lawton Review/nature recovery, addressing subsector training needs gaps and enhancing the experience of SEND/ECHP students.

We will measure this through: employer groups established and operating, evidence of new provision/delivery packages, evidence of shared provision/digital delivery, future research responses.

3.1.7 ICT, Digital and Data

Actions are:

- See Adult Education, Skills Hub and curriculum development actions above.
- Providers to explore opportunities for shared provision, including enhanced use of digital delivery, to address anticipated volume issues and specialised requirements.
- LSIP to draw together an appropriate group of employers, specialists and providers to further review requirements and opportunities, following which further actions will be agreed.
- Providers to consider how the care sector can best be supported around use of AI, VR and other digital opportunities.
- Stakeholders to promote and engage people to understand the increasing digital opportunities in sectors such as care, construction and land based, and more obvious ones such as manufacturing.
- Digital Accelerator Hub (opening July 2023), including L4/5 skills in AI, robotics, coding and more.

We will measure this through: future research responses, new/adapted provision, Digital Accelerator launched.

3.1.8 Leadership, Management and Business

In addition to actions listed under engagement and curriculum development above, actions are:

- Where not already done, employers and providers to review in detail, through LSIP groups, what

is needed and what is available and adapt/develop appropriate provision, as part of this exploring pathways to management, across the range of sectors. This includes ensuring courses at all levels and across sectors include sufficient focus on flexibility and ability to manage/lead change.

- LSIP to work with business support delivery, including on development of Shared Prosperity Fund delivery, including considering opportunities for peer/networking groups to support development.
- Given limited opportunities in smaller businesses, employers and providers to consider opportunities for sharing/placements in other businesses within management programmes.
- Cumbria Tourism and providers to complete development of a visitor economy middle/senior management development programme, including hospitality profitability at various levels.
- Providers will look to adopt, where feasible, appropriate programmes for land based already developed and accredited elsewhere (e.g. LANTRA Level 5 Leadership & Management) and consider in all provision the need for specific leadership, management and business skills relevant to land based, not least in a changing and challenging environment.
- Providers, employers and Skills for Care to work together to offer appropriate leadership and management development for the care sector, which may include specific cohorts of the Lancaster /UoC Senior Leaders Apprenticeship. More widely, ERBs to highlight to businesses the Lancaster University/UoC Senior Leadership Apprenticeship, which can be paid for through the Apprenticeship Levy, with the opportunity for sector specific cohorts.

We will measure this through: review and analysis of provision, future research responses; additional/ adapted provision.

3.1.9 Leadership, Management and Business

Actions to address this are:

- Providers and employers to explore and implement ways to reduce costs to employers, e.g. reducing travel time and costs (including through online options/elements), apprenticeship levy sharing, bringing cohorts together, increasing take-up of funded options and larger organisations opening up opportunities to others.
- Further and ongoing promotion by ERBs and providers of apprenticeship levy sharing.
- BAE have opened up their external training portal to their supply chain. ERBs to work with them to engage more local businesses and explore/encourage scope for similar by other employers.
- LSIP to encourage and facilitate Skills for Care Dataset completions to enable access to funding.
- WFD service actions (see 3.1.5 above) helping to bring groups of employers together to reduce costs to individual employers.
- Work with employers and improve promotion to enhance understanding of value for money.

We will measure this through: future survey responses, evidence of implementation of adaptations to delivery, sign ups to Skills for Care dataset, increased levy sharing.

3.1.10 Low Carbon, Net Zero and Energy Transition

Actions in this area are:

- ERBs to encourage and facilitate businesses to engage with relevant business support initiatives (such as Eco-I, CAfS and Future Fixers) to help them start developing skills and understanding.
- Employers, ERBs and providers to continue to work together to review, agree and develop/introduce relevant provision.
- Retrofit skills provision to continue to be reviewed and developed, by CITB, Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CafS) and providers, building on the Lakes College Retrofit Academy.

- Providers, ERBs, employers and LANSS to work together to fill gaps by adopting training programmes already developed and accredited elsewhere (e.g. SRUC's Peatland Restoration course) and, where needed, develop bespoke training programmes to cover areas such as tackling climate change, supporting delivery of the England Tree Action Plan, addressing Natural Capital/the Lawton Review/nature recovery and microrenewables.

This will be measured by: evidence of promotion; future research results; evidence of review and implementation.

3.1.11 Energy – A Growth Sector

Key initial actions are:

- Focus at this stage on ensuring the core engineering skills required by energy employers, which can then be adapted to each clean energy technology as required (usually via short course provision). Priority occupations are: electrical engineering (L6), mechanical engineering (L6), engineering maintenance (L3), engineering technicians (L3), pipe and plate welders (L3), engineering fitters (L3), engineering design and draughtspersons (L3), project controls technician (L3) / professional (L6). There will be a need to prepare for modular courses to support upskilling/transfer when requirements are clear.
- For the construction phases, focus on occupations such as: civil engineers (L6) and technicians (L3), construction site supervisors (L4) and managers (L6), quantity surveyors (L6), engineering construction riggers and erectors (L3), electrical trades and installation (L3) and scaffolders (L2).
- Recruitment and careers actions as highlighted in 3.1.1 above.
- Develop an infrastructure whereby information on employer needs can be fed into providers as it emerges, through a clean energy group including both employers and providers (with supporting research). This will mean enable employers will be better able to collectively:
 - Provide strategic and operational direction to the curriculum offer.
 - Co-invest resources in training programmes developed with their input.
 - Offer staff on a day release basis to enable the delivery of rigorous, high quality, adaptable learning programmes from Levels 3-7.
 - Participate in work with schools and colleges to inspire young people, their teachers, parents and peers, to seek careers in clean energy. This could include sponsored 'young apprenticeship' programmes, offering internships and summer job placements to year 9/10 pupils on a competitive basis.
 - Shape the focus of productivity and business development programmes delivered by the Business Growth Hub.

In addition there is scope to set out a more ambitious vision for technical education and training delivery from Cumbria that has nationwide appeal. Overall Cumbria appears well served by technical education and vocational training provision within the key engineering occupations that are likely to be central to future clean energy employer needs. There is an opportunity to broaden the ambition and reach of provision further, such as by:

- Establishing relationships between Cumbria providers and the key players in the clean energy industry that go beyond transactional arrangements (whereby providers respond once employers have known volumes of skills demand) into a more engaged model of employer engagement – co-designing programmes, sharing innovations, participating in applied research, spinouts, etc.
- Making Cumbrian providers a central part of the supply chain for a fleet of new SMRs, playing the leading role in developing the skills the UK requires for new nuclear developments. The same may apply to other aspects of clean energy, where the experience and expertise of Cumbrian providers

(long used to serving mainly local employers) can be developed in partnership with other employers, particularly in locations where clean energy developments are set to come on stream earlier and at greater scale than in Cumbria.

- A collective response to clean energy from providers. Clean energy will introduce new employers and new technologies to the county, which may require review and re-articulation of a visible curriculum offer to employers in Cumbria that spans all the major clean energy technologies now becoming available. This could operate under the banner of a Cumbria Clean Energy Academy, pulling together all the curriculum and qualifications into a branded offer, focused initially on development and installation activities, latterly on operational requirements. This could be undertaken with the sponsorship of major employers planning to invest in Cumbria.

This will be measured by: future research responses, group established and operating, collaborative working by providers, review of potential for a Cumbria Clean Energy Academy.

3.1.12 Future Skills/What the Future Looks Like

Initial actions to support employers (and providers) in understanding what the future could look like and therefore future skills are:

- Stakeholders (e.g. Chamber, Innovate UK/RTC, Electech Innovation Cluster, universities and other providers) to arrange initial event(s) and communications campaign for businesses to highlight and begin to explore future developments and opportunities, also involving those employers with a clearer view of the future. It will cover the range of sectors from care to manufacturing.
- ERBs to implement actions to improve engagement between Catapults and businesses around the county and link more businesses with universities, KTPs, etc.
- Chamber to draw together an appropriate group of employers, providers and specialists to review requirements and opportunities around provision of data and analysis skills, and agree further actions/recommendations.
- Stakeholders to work with Innovate UK/RTC to establish innovation centres around the county, and potentially a Catapult.

This will be measured by: initial event, future research responses, further action plan agreed, data analysis recommendations.

3.1.13 Underpinning Actions

3.1.13.1 Trainers and Educators

A shortage of quality trainers, assessors and educators with current skills has been highlighted, by employers and providers, impacting on delivery across the range of topics. We need to encourage and enable more skilled and experienced people into these roles. Actions needed by providers (supported by other stakeholders) to increase the pool of high quality, qualified trainers and educators are:

- Engaging employers in releasing part-time or seconding staff.
- Encouraging recent (particularly early) retirees back into the workforce, this time as trainers.
- Exploring and exploiting where appropriate sharing of trainers between providers.
- Implementing flexible options including part time and targeted input.
- Utilising opportunities such as service leavers.
- Actively and widely promoting opportunities to become a trainer.
- Greater focus on train the trainer programmes.

- Providers exploring opportunities for shared provision, including enhanced use of digital delivery, to address volume issues and specialised requirements.

This will be measured through feedback from providers on staffing.

3.1.13.2 Work Based Learning Provider Forum

A strong network of training providers in Cumbria is essential to support employers in recruiting, training, and retaining a suitably qualified and experienced workforce. Implementation of the LSIP can be progressed more effectively with an appropriately resourced and wider WBLPF. The WBLPF aims to provide an effective vehicle for collaborative working of training providers, including and beyond FE colleges, to ensure a strong provider infrastructure in Cumbria. It is now benefiting from resource through SDF2 and refreshed focus and reviewing future options and activity.

The actions are to:

- Continue to enhance and develop the WBLPF as an effective vehicle for collaborative working, ensuring a strong provider infrastructure undertaking collaborative research and representation activities and an enhanced vehicle for collaborative bidding and delivery to respond to identified skills needs. This includes reviewing resourcing requirements and funding models/sources.
- Support LSIP implementation with e.g. a series of “focus on” sessions, coordinated/collaborative provision and working to enhance promotion and engagement with employers.

This will be measured through: evidence of WBLPF activities, dedicated resource appointed, number of members.

3.1.13.3 Holistic Model - Bringing the Education and Skills Agenda Together

Given their remit, LSIPs are only part of the picture. It became clear from the work with stakeholders in producing our Trailblazer that there is a need and opportunity to bring the wider agenda together more effectively. This is a driver from wider stakeholders rather than employers but will be an important element in addressing employer needs and relevant and effective provision that works in alignment throughout the whole education and skills system in Cumbria.

The action is development of a holistic and place-based Education & Skills Model for Cumbria building on initial discussions underway between stakeholders. This would bring the education and skills agenda together more effectively for Cumbria, working with DfE and DLUHC and drawing on our extant asset base. It would cover strategy, commissioning, and delivery aspects across the whole agenda, more widely than the remit of the LSIP, and, e.g. involve the Chamber, LEP, local government and education & skills providers with governance, accountabilities, and accountable body to be determined against intended scope, role and responsibilities.

This will be measured through: initial proposal, development and implementation of the model.

3.2 Process

Our process for producing this LSIP report is set out in Annex B below. In production of this report we have built on our Trailblazer report, which around 1,100 businesses were actively engaged in (with thousands more given multiple opportunities to input and comment). Specific to this latest report we

have had active direct input from 670 businesses through surveys, 1-2-1s and focus groups, again with thousands more invited to engage and comment. Both have benefited from significant engagement with providers and other stakeholders.

Working to a delivery plan, reviewed and updated at monthly, our intention is to continue with:

- Monitoring of and updating on progress as set out in 3.3 below.
- An ongoing programme of targeted 1-2-1s, focus groups and surveys, with research topics informed by the Steering Group, ERB Group and WBLPF e.g. further deep dives into elements of energy, future skills, employer perspective on apprenticeship completions and what could be done to increase. These will be led by ERB partners (e.g.. Chamber, Cumbria Tourism, CITB), working with contracted organisations for research where appropriate, and informed/supported by other ERB partners such as The Farmer Network, NFU and BECBC.
- A monitoring survey in summer 2023 to assess e.g. how engaged employers feel with providers and with schools, view of fitness for purpose, etc, with refresh surveys each February to inform March 2024 and 2025 updates.
- Undertaking a programme of activity working with the WBLPF, including e.g.:
 - Further enhanced engagement, coordination, support and where appropriate joint working between forum members (providers, including Adult Education, and other stakeholders such as JCP, Careers Hub, Inspira, etc.) and engagement on an ongoing basis with the LSIP around ongoing information and research needs and progress.
 - Regular “focus on” meetings, supported by pre and post research by the LSIP, bringing together forum members and others including employers, ERBs and/or other stakeholders/initiatives as relevant e.g. focus on clean energy/carbon reduction, the visitor economy, in work progression, disability, etc, with the intention of ensuring the whole is greater than the parts bringing to bear our activities in IAG, Bootcamps, Multiply, apprenticeships, disability support, job seekers and in work progression, etc.
 - WBLPF Annual Conference bringing together employers, providers and other stakeholders to share and discuss impact, initiatives, challenges and opportunities and to network.
 - Work with the Councils, ERBs and employers to support more care leavers into successful education and employment.
- Continuing to engage and work with other relevant groups such as SAP/PESSG, Furness employers’ employment and skills group and Eden Skills & Employment Group.
- Ongoing communications campaign to engage and inform businesses and other stakeholders.
- Working with the SDF Consortium and expanded LSIF Consortium now coming together.
- Continuing to support providers in production of the Accountability Statements.
- Group and 1-2-1 discussions with providers and other relevant stakeholders.
- Additional engagement with other relevant LSIPs around areas of shared interest/potential collaboration including national opportunities such as energy where we are already working with Suffolk and northern Chambers on supply chain opportunities including skills and training.

3.3 Monitoring

Intended measures for monitoring purposes are set out under each section of proposed actions in 3.1 above. These will be reviewed at least quarterly and reported to and discussed by the Steering and ERB Groups (see 3.4 below). Further measures will be considered and agreed as the plan develops. An important element of this monitoring will be further employer surveys which we will undertake at regular intervals to check progress on engagement, awareness, fitness for purpose of curriculum etc. – combined with or alongside further research as appropriate.

We have a detailed Priorities, Issues, Opportunities and Actions table, building on that produced for and annexed in our Trailblazer report, which we are running as living document, updating it for actions/changes on an ongoing basis. It includes further detail, actions and timescales and provides a useful vehicle for measuring and monitoring progress. Updates will continue to be shared periodically through our website.

In addition we update on progress periodically to the Chamber Board, Work-Based Learning Provider Forum, SAP/PESGG and other groups.

3.4 Governance

Cumbria's LSIP is led and managed by Cumbria Chamber as lead ERB, working in partnership with other key ERBs active in Cumbria, bringing to bear their contacts, engagement and sector expertise.

Our approach builds on the significant work, engagement and relationships already established as part of our LSIP Trailblazer, ensuring wide engagement with employers, providers and other stakeholders, and aiming to achieve buy-in. To do this we have reviewed and continued with the Steering and ERB Groups established within that Trailblazer, ensuring key influencers have been fully informed during the work and contributed to it, and support the recommendations for change and roadmap for delivery. We also reviewed and refreshed our stakeholder mapping, stakeholder engagement and management plan and communications plan.

The ERB group consists of, the key ERBs active in Cumbria and relevant to our LSIP priorities, who are partners with us in the LSIP bringing their engagement, knowledge and expertise and ensuring their buy-in: Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster; Confederation of British Industry; Construction Industry Training Board; Country Land & Business Association; Cumbria Tourism; National Farmers Union; The Farmer Network. Missing is the FSB who decided not to engage. Recently we have taken the decision (in agreement with them) to suspend the CBI from active participation given their current issues.

Sitting alongside the ERB Group is a Steering Group. Membership of this Group is: Cumbria Chamber of Commerce (chair); BAE Systems (employer representative and representing SAP/PESGG); Cumberland Council; Cumbria Careers Hub; Cumbria LEP; Cumbria Economic Observatory; Cumbria Tourism (representing the ERB Group); Chair of the Work-based Learning Provider Forum; Lakes College (representing the Strategic Development Fund initiative); Westmorland & Furness Council.

Both groups operate as consultation groups to agreed Terms of Reference. We continue to review their make-up for fitness for purpose and are planning to add two additional employer representatives to the Steering Group.

Our conflicts of interest and anti-bribery and corruption policies and LSIP register of interests are available on the LSIP page of our website, with the latter kept updated.

We operate a PID, implementation/delivery plan, risk register, stakeholder mapping and stakeholder management and communications plan for the LSIP.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF THE LOCAL AREA

Cumbria is a rural county, with pockets of significant, entrenched deprivation and multigenerational unemployment alongside areas of high pay/high employment rates. The supply of workforce and skills are not always geographically located where demand is highest.

Despite a large geographic area (6,800 sq. kms, 2nd largest county) Cumbria has the lowest population density and economic output density per hectare of any LEP area so space to grow. The resident population is 500, 821 (2021) with a working age population of 298,861 (ONS 2021). 54% of the population lives in a rural community (ONS 2020).

Our 23,105 PAYE/VAT registered businesses (ONS 2022) include 0.3% large employers, with the balance SMEs and primarily micro-businesses (89.3%). Just over half are classified as companies, with the rest primarily partnerships and self-employed sole traders. 58% are rural (FAME database), including the majority of manufacturing businesses.

The county is coterminous in terms of operation of the LEP and the Chamber. Until 31st March 2023 it was also coterminous with the boundary of Cumbria County Council, with six district authorities sitting within that. Following local government reorganisation the seven authorities have merged to form Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness Councils as two single tier authorities within that boundary. There are also a well-functioning SAP and a Work-based Learning Provider Forum in place covering the same geography.

Cumbria is the most self-contained LEP area in terms of travel-to-work flows at the level of overall LEP area. The 2011 Census shows that 96% of Cumbria's residents worked in the county and 94% of all jobs in Cumbria were filled by Cumbrian residents (2021 data on this is not yet available).

While the county is a functional economic area (FEMA), Cumbria's £12bn economy has an unusual polycentric industrial structure made up of a series of overlapping travel to work and FEMAs with people and businesses dispersed across the area but centred on our main towns and city. For example, there is significant travel to work in the nuclear industry from Carlisle and Allerdale to Copeland, from Allerdale across to Carlisle from various sectors and from South Lakeland to Barrow. The degree of overlap makes it sensible to consider Cumbria as a whole.

A similar position applies to skills delivery, with colleges in key locations around the county delivering a range of skills alongside specialisms, and a similarly spread range of private sector providers. Within the area we have four general FE colleges (in Carlisle, Kendal, Workington and Barrow), a number of independent training providers and a university delivering skills at a level relevant to the LSIP, plus specialist provision. The University of Cumbria has several campuses across the county and outside it. There is well established cooperative working between the FE colleges, universities and independent providers operating in the county.

There was a fifth college, Newton Rigg in Penrith, which was a dedicated agricultural, horticultural, animal

care, equine, and forestry college. This closed in 2021. Some elements of its curriculum have been picked up by others, and more are in the pipeline, but significant gaps remain. There is also a National Nuclear College with facilities and headquarters aligned to Sellafield in West Cumbria and Hinkley Point in Somerset. The latter college is a collaborative venture, working with other FE/HE institutions, private sector training providers and employers and does not deliver itself, but signposts to the FE colleges in Cumbria and Somerset, as well as to other private sector providers.

Cumbria's GVA and workforce are spread across a range of industries. We have significant strengths and activity in manufacturing (22% of GVA, ONS 2021), including nuclear, advanced manufacturing and food & drink. Cumbria is responsible for nationally significant economic assets across our energy, low carbon, and defence industries, with Sellafield Ltd and BAE Systems our two largest business employers.

Agriculture/land based businesses and the visitor economy are also key, with agriculture vital in supporting the landscape so valuable to our visitor economy and underpinning our vibrant food & drink sector. We have 45m visitors a year.

Employment by sector, ONS Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) 2021 is:

| | No. | % |
|---|---------|-------|
| Agriculture, forestry & fishing | 14,000 | 5.6 |
| Mining, quarrying & utilities | 2,500 | 1.0 |
| Manufacturing | 36,000 | 14.5 |
| Construction | 17,000 | 6.8 |
| Motor trades | 5,000 | 2.0 |
| Wholesale | 7,000 | 2.8 |
| Retail | 24,000 | 9.6 |
| Transport & storage | 12,000 | 4.8 |
| Accommodation & food services | 31,000 | 12.4 |
| Information & communication | 2,500 | 1.0 |
| Financial & insurance | 3,000 | 1.2 |
| Property | 4,000 | 1.6 |
| Professional, scientific & technical | 14,000 | 5.6 |
| Business administration & support services | 11,000 | 4.4 |
| Public administration | 11,000 | 4.4 |
| Education | 15,000 | 6.0 |
| Health (including social care) | 33,000 | 13.3 |
| Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services | 9,000 | 3.6 |
| All sectors | 249,000 | 100.0 |

While there are some points of focus, such as nuclear in West Cumbria and hospitality in more rural locations and the Lake District, there is sector spread across the county. So, there is nuclear supply chain and advanced manufacturing across every district, and similarly other key sectors.

In terms of both emerging growth clusters and current priority sectors, opportunities are spread across the county rather than concentrated in one smaller area. These include nuclear, low carbon, green energy/products, visitor economy, manufacturing, and food & drink.

We have significant issues in developing and retaining higher level skills. The proportion of the working age population with Level 4 qualifications, whilst improving, continues to be below the national average and one of the lowest rates in England. The proportion of young people in apprenticeships is 70-80% above the England average, depending on the precise measure used.

Productivity per hour is 19% below the national average (ONS Regional Accounts 2020), only in part due to industrial structure. We have few fast-growing firms (relatively and absolutely). Skills shortages are impacting negatively on productivity and growth. Physical and digital infrastructure remains a challenge, impacting on travel to learn as well as on accessing online options. We are also lagging behind in terms of economic output growth at 7.5% 2012-22, against a UK figure of 16.5%.

In the 2020 Cumbria Business Survey, a fifth of Cumbrian businesses report skills gaps that are having a major impact on their business – in our most recent research in 2023, 48% reported current shortages.

Post-Brexit we have lost much of our European workforce (vital to the visitor economy, important in food & drink, etc) exacerbated by workers leaving the visitor economy during Covid. Many have not returned and there has also been a knock-on effect, with staff attracted from social care (for example) into the visitor economy and retail, not least as wages in these sectors have been forced up while earnings in care remain a significant issue.

Cumbria's SAP has compiled useful information about skills needs and challenges, including the Local Skills Report (LSR) and its refreshes in 2022 and 2023, and developed a range of interventions supporting the county's ambitions Our LSIP has been designed to work constructively with the SAP/other stakeholders, building on this work to ensure provision meets employers' current and future needs. Our challenges present opportunities for employers and the skills system to work together to develop an offer that responds to the critical needs set out above as well as the changes brought about by digitisation and the increasing drive to develop 'green jobs' in our economy.

The role of the SAP in Cumbria is delivered by Cumbria LEP's PESSG, and this is the thematic arm of the Cumbria LEP Board for all employment, education and skills related issues and provides advice and recommendations to the LEP Board on future investment in line with the current advice and recommendations to the LEP Board on future investment in line with the current and future needs of the Cumbrian economy.

The five priorities developed by the SAP to address the skills and training development needs of the Cumbrian economy are:

- Making the best use of available talent.
- Developing and retaining higher level skills in the county.
- Creating the future workforce and skills to meet the needs of our economy.
- Developing our future leaders and managers.
- Addressing worklessness and youth unemployment.

The LSR identifies 3 strategic challenges:

- Reducing working age population, exacerbating acute labour shortage.
- Limited pool of higher level skills, linked to below par productivity.
- Local concentrations of worklessness which are particularly concerning given acute labour shortages.

The LSR also references longer term skills needs, employers looking to replace over 86k job roles 2017-2027 (replacement demand due to retirement etc.) with demand in every sector but especially in corporate managers & directors, health professionals, health & social care associate professionals, caring personal service occupations, teaching and educational professionals, business/media/public services, skilled agricultural and related trades, leisure/travel/related personal service occupations, transport/mobile machine drivers and operatives. It highlights that there will also be significant replacement demand for administrative sales and public service occupations. Previous analysis of longer term growth sectors and occupations suggests growth in the following areas (within an overall largely static employment level): caring and personal service occupations, customer service occupations, health and social care associate professionals, corporate managers and directors and business/media/public service professionals, also more broadly leadership and management and digital skills.

The 2023 Apprenticeship Strategy for Cumbria highlights its key objectives as:

- Develop more quality apprenticeships in skills areas to meet the current and future needs of the economy (including hospitality, IT skills and the move to the green economy).
- Improving participation levels in apprenticeships overall (while improving gender representation in some areas, increasing uptake in older age groups and encouraging social mobility and workforce diversity).
- Improving preparation for apprenticeships and readiness for work (including supporting those entering apprenticeships with readiness to work skills and encouraging and promoting the Provider Access Legislation).
- Improving delivery of apprenticeships and so outcomes (including better support for smaller businesses and involving retiring workers as mentors and trainers).

More detail on apprenticeships is provided in Cumbria LEP's Apprenticeship Strategy 2023. This includes splits of specific apprenticeships within the topic areas. Most pertinent to this report are:

- Agriculture 50 starts in 2021/22 up 112.5% from 2018/19
- Animal care & veterinary science 50, up 34.5%
- Environmental conservation, up 500%
- Horticulture and forestry 10, down by 77.3%
- Business management 320 down 24.1%
- Marketing and sales 10, down 10%
- Building and construction 570, up 5.3%
- Engineering 590, up 27.1%
- Manufacturing technologies 220 down 43.2%
- Health & social care 400, down 19.6%
- ICT for users 10, down 14.3%
- ICT for practitioners down 23.6%
- Travel & tourism 10 up 28.6%
- Hospitality and catering (falls under retail and commercial) 130 down 25.6%

Local area apprenticeship data from the DfE Localities Datacube 2021/22 (resident) indicates:

- 3,860 starts by Cumbrian residents and 9,765 active participants during the year (including those who started in earlier years).
- The number of starts recovered somewhat after declining in each of the previous 3 years (two of which were badly impacted by the pandemic) but levels remain lower than in 2018/19.
- 40% of starters were aged 16-18 which means approximately 10% of the population in this age group started an apprenticeship in 2021/22 and around 17% were actively involved in one.
- 33% of starters were aged 25+, often existing members of the workforce upskilling.
- 289 providers started apprenticeships in 2021/22 and 385 had active participants during the year, with 77% having fewer than 10 active participants and the top 10 providers accounting for 60% of starts.
- 9 of the top 10 providers are locally based and 5 of the top 10 colleges/universities.
- 5 subject areas accounted for 90% of all starts – engineering & manufacturing technologies (25%); health, public services & care (21%); business administration & law (20%); construction & planning (15%); retail & commercial enterprise (7%). At national level these five groups account for a similar share (87%) however the distribution is very different. Cumbria stands out as having relatively high shares of starts in manufacturing, engineering and construction (40% overall compared to England 22%). The area of Cumbria's economic specialism that is not well represented is visitor economy. Overall in 2021/22 there were 30 starts in leisure tourism and travel and 130 in hospitality and catering, together just 4% of starts. In contrast around 17% of all Cumbria's jobs are in accommodation and food services and in arts, culture and leisure. Furthermore the number of starts has been falling in this subject area by more than the overall decline in starts.
- Education and training accounted for 4% as did agriculture, horticulture and animal care. Information & communications followed at 2% and leisure, travel and tourism at 1%. Splits within this topic areas are listed in the Apprenticeship Strategy.
- 29% of starts were Intermediate Apprenticeships (level 2), 45% Advanced (level 3) and 27% Higher (including degree).
- The top 10 providers were Gen2, Lakes College, Kendal College, BAE Systems, Furness College, NCG/Carlisle College, University of Cumbria, Lifetime Training Group, RWP Training (no longer trading), System People.

The Unit for Future Skills Local Skills Dashboard highlights, for example:

- October 2022, 244,500 people employed of which: 19.8% hotels & restaurants (16.2% England), 11.3% manufacturing (8.4%), 6.9% construction (6.6%), energy & utilities 8.1% (1.5%), agriculture & fishery 1.5% (0.7%).
- Online job adverts 6,715 including
 - Healthcare 18.4% compared with England 12.6%
 - Engineering 8.2% compared with 6.1%
 - Hospitality 6.4% compared with 3.6%.
- Cumbria's employment rate January – December 2022 was 77%, close to the England rate of 76%.
- FE participation 14,570 - apprenticeships 53.3% (compared with England 38.5%), education & training 34.8% (compared with 45.7%) and community learning 11.9% (compared with 15.8%).
- FE achievement 21/22 8,245 – apprenticeships 23.1% (England 12.5%), education & training 54.3% (England 61.9%) and community learning 22.6% (England 25.6%).
- SSA FE achievement e.g. engineering manufacturing and technology 5% compared with 3.4%, construction planning and built environment 4.8% compared with 4.2%.
- KS4 destinations: sustained education 83.2% (England 89.3%), sustained apprenticeship 7.8% (2.4%), sustained employment 4.3% (2.4%).
- KS5 destinations: sustained education 45.2% (51.9%), sustained employment 23.2% (21.2%), sustained apprenticeships 14.5% (6.4%).

The LSR Evidence Base 2023 refresh provides an overview of skills issues and opportunities in Cumbria as of spring 2023, based on available data sources. It summarises the economic and demographic context for skills as:

- The Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on the UK economy and labour market during 2020 and 2021. It also appears to have impacted negatively on the overall supply of labour as a result of a reduction in rates of labour market participation (linked to earlier retirement and health/sickness issues coupled with the impact of Brexit).
- At a UK level there is a very uncertain economic outlook for the next few years (2023 and 2024) in terms of overall growth and employment change as the economy struggles to recover from the impacts of inflation, the cost of living crisis and squeezed real income.
- The rapid recovery from Covid coupled with an effective fall in labour supply has led to record numbers of reported vacancies and a tight labour market nationally.
- The UK continues to suffer from sluggish productivity growth and this is forecast to continue. Most parts of Cumbria have seen productivity rates drop compared to the UK in recent years and productivity rates overall remain significantly behind national and regional averages.
- Cumbria's economy has followed a similar overall path to that of the UK over the last five years. However, its rate of growth in the period leading up to Covid was slower than nationally and the evidence suggests it has bounced back more slowly, in part because of very acute shortages of labour.
- The medium term baseline prospects for Cumbria are for slow growth constrained by labour supply, with (net) falls in employment levels in most sectors.
- Cumbria faces a significant demographic challenge over the next 10 to 15 years that is a continuation of the past declines in core working age population (the population aged 16 to 64 fell by 14,000 or 4.5% in the 10 years to 2021). The population aged 16 to 64 is projected to fall by a further 16,000 (6%) in the 10 years from 2022.
- This fall is likely to be offset, in part, by increases in economic activity rates for over 55s and due to a large increase in over 65s. The fall of around 13,000 in those economically active aged 16 to 64 may be offset by an increase of 8,000 in those aged over 65, largely those aged 65 to 69 (+6,000). Those aged over 65 are much more likely to work part-time however so will not fully offset reductions in younger people in work.
- These really important changes in economic activity in the over 60s depend on several factors: choice of work available, employers' actions, pensions, living standards and health.
- Although increases in economic activity rates for those aged 55 and over and especially 65 plus may offset falls in core working age, there is still likely to be a very substantial squeeze in the available labour force in Cumbria without substantial increases in net in migration of people of core working age. The fall in working age population and future workforce is an issue across all parts of Cumbria, but based on current predictions is expected to be especially acute in Barrow and Copeland.

Past changes in skills supply and demand are highlighted as:

- Cumbria has traditionally and consistently over time seen a large rate of net out-migration of those aged 16 to 19 (largely to study outside Cumbria) with some offsetting net inflows of those aged 25 to 35 and stronger inflows of those aged 35 and over.
- In the 10 years to 2016, there were strong net inflows of international migrants especially in younger age cohorts (16 to 34) and total migration had a net positive effect on our working population.
- Since 2016 the pattern has changed with very limited net international immigration (and indeed some net out migration of those under 35). However the position in respect of younger UK residents has improved so that UK based migration has had a net positive impact on the working age population.

- Overall the EU migrant workforce was much less important in Cumbria than elsewhere. However it was concentrated in Carlisle, Penrith and the Lake District – areas vulnerable to the impact of Brexit on employers’ ability to find migrant labour to fill jobs.

On quality of skills in Cumbria, key points are:

- There are many different ways of measuring the quality of skills and labour supply (occupations filled, qualifications held etc). A widely used measure is the proportion of the workforce with graduate/degree level or equivalent qualifications and the proportion with no qualifications. These are both broad proxies for skill levels and need careful interpretation, especially because Cumbria has a high density of those who have good technical non-degree level qualifications.
- The starting point for skills is the school system. Overall outcomes are in line with the regional average but slightly below the all-England average. The performance gap is largest in Carlisle and Barrow. However, both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils on average perform less well than the England and regional averages. This suggests, given the lower share of disadvantaged pupils relative to regional and national averages, schools in Cumbria on average might be expected to perform better in respect of academic achievement.
- School leavers are less likely than average to proceed into further or higher education, largely because the rate of progression into apprenticeships is very much higher in Cumbria than most other parts of the country (15% compared to 6%).
- We have a strong apprenticeships system, especially in Barrow and Copeland (due to the influence of larger employers there) and overall reflecting the importance of engineering and manufacturing.
- There are some areas where the apprenticeships offer does not match or meet the needs of current and future skills needs. Overall, as in the rest of England, there are issues with relatively low rates of completion of apprenticeships (around 50%). Apprenticeships can lead to a range of skills and qualification levels including degree level qualifications.
- Cumbria has relatively low rates of progress into higher education. Data from OfS suggests that the rate is 35% compared to 42% in England. However, the difference is accounted for by the higher proportion of school leavers progressing into apprenticeships.
- The role of entry into, and exits from, higher education and apprenticeships plays an important longer term role in the supply of skills. However, as important is the pattern of movement of the workforce into and out of Cumbria leading to the stock of skills.
- The situation in the current supply of skills suggests that, overall, the proportion of higher level qualifications held by the labour force is less than national or regional averages overall (whether measured as NVQ4+ or NVQ3+) and in all parts of Cumbria except South Lakeland.

With respect to current skills demand:

- Unemployment rates have for some time been, and are currently, particularly low, reflecting the imbalance between supply and demand for labour. Depending on the measure used there are 7,000 to 8,000 unemployed residents. Economic activity and employment rates are above regional and national levels.
- Although overall the proportion of adults economically inactive due to sickness/illness is similar to national levels, a detailed drill down suggests that there could be around 5,000 economically inactive who could work with the right support and opportunities.
- Data on job postings provides a good snapshot of the occupations where there is the strongest demand for labour and most acute shortages. Overall, it suggests there is one job posting for every 20 jobs filled across all sectors. The sectors with the largest absolute levels of postings are health and social work, wholesale/retail and accommodation and food. This reflects the size of these sectors in terms of employment and in the case of health/social care a high percentage of jobs postings relative to the workforce.

- By occupation, the jobs accounting for the most vacancies are as follows (note that postings do not fully align with gaps identified by employers):

| Current vacancies/job postings in Cumbria | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Absolute level of vacancies | Rate of vacancies reported * | | |
| | Higher | Medium | Lower |
| High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health professionals (1,140) • Science, research, engineering and technology professionals (890) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary administration and service (1,120) • Caring personal service (1,180) | |
| Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science, engineering and technology associate professionals (560) • Business, media and public service professionals (750) • Customer service (450) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and public service associate professionals (640) • Sales occupations (770) • Administration (800) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate managers and directors (520) |
| Low | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and mobile machine drivers • Other skilled trades • Health and social care associate professionals • Teaching and educational professionals • Other managers and proprietors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretarial and related occupations • Skilled construction and building trades • Culture, media and sports • Process, plant and machine operatives • Elementary trades and related occupations • Skilled agricultural and related trades |

Source: Nicol Economics analysis of data from Lightcast™ 2023. Note: rate is high if 8% or over, low is 4% or under. Numbers are average postings June 2022 to February 2023

- The top 10 reported specific skills were: nursing, auditing, housekeeping, finance, risk analysis, personal care, key performance indicators (KPIs), mental health, warehousing and midwifery.
- The top 10 “common skills” mentioned were: communications, management, customer service, sales, leadership, detail oriented, planning, enthusiasm, operations and teaching.

The LSR refresh summarises forecasts of future skills demand as follows:

- Recent research has identified the important long term drivers of skills demand being:
 - Technological change. New technological advancements (digitalisation, automation and AI) displacing certain types or parts of jobs which are more routine, and creating new jobs. Faster adoption of technology in the workplace, including increasing AI and automation is increasing demand for IT skills across a range of sectors and occupations.
 - Climate and regulatory changes. The global and UK transition to a greener economy, with the government's target of reaching its 'net zero' carbon by 2050, is altering the occupational and skills composition of the UK labour market.
 - Structural changes. These include globalisation, sub-contracting and extension of supply chains and emphasise the need for high quality managerial skills (across a greater range than previously and at a greater depth) at various levels.
 - Working practices. The introduction of team/cell-based production in engineering and call centres in financial service is resulting in increased demand for communication and team working skills. There has been an increase in labour market flexibility and working flexibly and remotely.
- A new set of national and local labour and skills projections to 2035 has recently been produced. They predict the continuation of long term shifts by occupation and skills qualification levels (to higher qualifications and generally more professional and associate professional occupations).
- For the UK, the baseline forecasts an average 0.4% pa growth in the workforce in the UK over the period 2020 to 2035, with:
 - A strong upward shift in the qualifications level required or used in the workplace. The proportion of jobs requiring a degree or higher degree level equivalent qualification is forecast to rise from 48% in 2020 to 62% by 2035.
 - A dramatic fall in the numbers with no or low level qualifications (QFC 0 or 1) from 15% to just 8% by 2035.
- The projections also consider the need for replacement demand (workforce retiring or changing job). Over the 15 year period to 2035 the projections suggest that on average each year across the UK there will be around 1.35 million jobs to be filled of which just 170,000 (13%) will be as a result of a net increase in demand, with 1.18 million (87%) due to replacement demand.
- The results for Cumbria need to be treated carefully as they are in effect business as usual projections and assume the past relationships between the national economy and patterns of jobs continue. The key findings are:
 - A large increase in the share of the workforce requiring degree level or greater qualifications from 40% to 53% (a similar shift as forecast for the whole UK). However, Cumbria is projected to continue having a significantly lower share of jobs with degree or equivalent levels qualification by 2035.
 - Overall forecast net growth in employment is accounted for by net growth in professional (10,000 jobs, 16%) and associate professional (5,000, 16%) and in caring occupations (3,000, 12%).
 - Overall, 60% of the net growth is forecast to be in health and care related occupations (linked to the ageing population in the main).
 - Annual average overall demand for labour of around 10,000 jobs to be filled of which around 9,000 (around 90%) is a result of replacement demand.
 - In all occupations, replacement demand more than offsets any net reduction leading to positive demand for jobs to be filled in all occupations over the next 10 to 15 years.
 - Although this projection suggests the continuation of demand and need for the vast bulk of existing occupations, the nature of skills needed will change within nearly all occupations as a result of the important drivers of skills (technology, climate change, structural change, new working practices).

Cumbria Clean Energy Strategy outlines how the county can help decarbonise via growth in clean energy and the reduction of emissions. In relation to the former, the focus is on offshore wind, nuclear, hydrogen/

CCUS, and renewables. The strategy notes Cumbria's advantages such as:

- Natural capital – the aspects of the county's physical geography and geology that leave it well placed to harness clean energy opportunities.
- Supply chain strengths – Cumbria's strong engineering and manufacturing base, with expertise in nuclear, advanced manufacturing, marine engineering and civil engineering.
- Enabling infrastructure – the presence of critical energy transmission and storage networks.
- Skilled and innovative talent pool – the extensive education and training infrastructure in Cumbria including the National College for Nuclear, Energen, Gen2, Energy Coast UTC, Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centre at Furness, four FE colleges and University of Cumbria.

It highlights three main ambitions in relation to clean energy in Cumbria:

- The generation of up to 9GW of clean energy by 2040, establishing Cumbria as a key clean energy producer for the UK.
- Driving up to 13,000 new jobs from clean energy deployment in Cumbria.
- Selection of the Moorside site for innovative fusion energy, placing Cumbria at the forefront of 'the UK and global race for abundant long term affordable clean energy'.

2050 Cumbria Balanced Scenario report, produced by Navigant Consulting with the support of Cadent and Electricity North West, projects how energy supply and use in Cumbria could change in pursuit of decarbonisation. It foresees that total demand within Cumbria will fall from 15.5TWH in 2018 to 9.5TWH in 2050, as energy efficiency measures take effect. While electricity (mainly derived from local generation) will form the largest energy supply in future, the report projects that hydrogen will account for around 37% of energy supply, mainly in response to energy demands from buildings. Hydrogen supply in Cumbria is expected to begin from the early 2030s, largely as a replacement for natural gas. Notably, around two-thirds of hydrogen in Cumbria is expected to be green hydrogen, well above the forecast national average of 20%.

Westmorland & Furness Council's Plan 2023, sets out aims as follows (among others):

Sustainable, inclusive economic growth

- Sustainable, inclusive economic growth is essential to deliver high quality jobs.
- This is essential in our drive to support the delivery of services which underpin our quality of life, as well as helping us retain our young people and attract investment and skilled people.
- We will support new business creation and actively support the cultural economy to thrive.

A confident, empowered and inclusive workforce

- We value individuals and are committed to leading and empowering our workforce to be innovative, engaged and customer focused.
- We will support employee wellbeing, nurture talent, and create a healthy working environment that enables everyone to fulfil their potential and a place where the whole workforce is focussed on delivering great services.

A great place to work with

- Opportunities for jobs, learning, skills and enterprise.
- A sustainable, inclusive, diverse, economy.
- A growing workforce and high quality jobs.
- Support to encourage business creation.
- Improved infrastructure and connectivity.

Providing leadership in the drive to become carbon net zero

- We care about the climate and the impact climate change is having on everyone.
- Westmorland and Furness Council is working hard to ensure that the area we serve becomes carbon net zero by 2037, and our organisation, as soon as possible.
- We will address biodiversity loss by encouraging better land management, habitat creation, tree planting and net biodiversity gain in new housing developments.

Cumberland Council's Plan 2023-2027 includes:

- Taking a fresh approach to the delivery of inclusive services that are shaped by our residents and communities. By enabling positive outcomes for health and wellbeing, prosperity and the environment we will fulfil the potential of our people and our area.
- The local economy can have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals. We want to enable the move to an economy that builds wealth locally and offers opportunities for everyone and people have the skills to take them. We want to achieve greater social value in public sector procurements, exploring more ways of retaining wealth within our community. We will seek to utilise our assets as a catalyst for economic activity, generating opportunities for residents, businesses, social enterprises and the community and voluntary sector alike.
- The environment in which our people live has a huge impact on health and wellbeing. The climate and environmental emergency demands our attention, our leadership and our action. The repercussions of inaction will be significant for our local economy and our services. We want to support the growth of a low carbon economy by working with others to identify opportunities, help businesses and residents manage resources better and ensure appropriate training opportunities are in place. We want to help the most vulnerable with issues such as fuel poverty and the impacts of extreme weather.
- We are committed to addressing systemic inequalities such as racism, and making Cumberland a fairer place. We will take a proactive approach to delivering the public sector equality duty. We want our residents to access opportunities that will empower them to achieve their goals. Inequality continues to hold people back from reaching their true potential and we will work with residents and partners to challenge entrenched issues in areas such as health, education, life expectancy and deprivation. We have a key focus on food security and the food system. We believe that each resident has a "Right to Food". This means that food should be adequate, available and accessible.

ANNEX B

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE LSIP

Stage A Articulating Employers' Skills Needs

Cumbria's LSIP is led and managed by Cumbria Chamber as lead Employer Representative Body (ERB), working in partnership with other key ERBs active in Cumbria, bringing to bear their contacts, engagement and sector expertise.

Our approach builds on the significant work, engagement and relationships already established as part of our LSIP Trailblazer, ensuring wide engagement with employers, providers and other stakeholders, and aiming to achieve buy-in. To do this we have reviewed and continued with the Steering and ERB Groups established within that Trailblazer, ensuring key influencers have been fully informed during the work and contributed to it, and support the recommendations for change and roadmap for delivery. We also reviewed and refreshed our stakeholder mapping, stakeholder engagement and management plan and communications plan.

The ERB group consists of the key ERBs active in Cumbria and relevant to our LSIP priorities, who are partners with us in the LSIP bringing their engagement, knowledge and expertise and ensuring their buy-in:

- Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster
- Confederation of British Industry
- Construction Industry Training Board
- Country Land and Business Association
- Cumbria Tourism
- National Farmers Union
- The Farmer Network

Missing is the FSB who took the decision not to engage. Recently we have taken the decision, in agreement with them, to suspend the CBI from active participation given their current issues.

Sitting alongside the ERB Group is a Steering Group. Membership of the Steering Group:

- Cumbria Chamber of Commerce (chair)
- BAE Systems, as an employer representative and representing SAP/PESGG
- Cumberland Council
- Cumbria Careers Hub
- Cumbria LEP
- Cumbria Economic Observatory
- Cumbria Tourism, representing the ERB Group
- Lakes College, representing the Strategic Development Fund initiative
- Westmorland and Furness Council
- Work-based Learning Provider Forum

Both groups operate as consultation groups to agreed Terms of Reference. We continue to review their make-up for fitness for purpose and are planning to add two additional employer representatives to the Steering Group.

Although not ERBs, we have also continued to engage with other stakeholders active in skills development for employers such as The Food, Farming & Countryside Commission, Cumbria Local Nature Partnership, The Homebuilders Federation, Skills for Care and others.

Cumbria Chamber sits at the heart of the county's business community. In undertaking this work we have used our opted-in business contact database for Cumbria (10,000 opted-in emails); Growth Hub and Chamber websites (350,000 unique visitors); social media e.g., LinkedIn (4,841), Facebook (4,800), Twitter (18,576), with significant sharing. Excluding this LSIP activity, in the last 7 years alone we have worked with 17,000 businesses (74% of IDBR) across all sectors, sizes and life cycle stages throughout Cumbria, urban and rural. We are actively engaged with private and public sector employers. We have operated Cumbria Growth Hub since 2011, providing business support countywide and linking businesses with other support/skills provision.

In devising our communications and engagement plan we have aimed to achieve engagement with a broad range of employers, countywide and across a range of sectors. This includes going beyond the "usual suspects" actively engaged with the LEP and/or providers, and beyond our own membership and engagement to include those connected with other ERBs and those not actively engaged with employer organisations or other key stakeholders, reaching employers who may not naturally respond to this type of approach (harder to reach).

We designed our LSIP employer engagement, to meet the following five tests:

- Provide a robust analysis and clearly articulate employer current/future skills needs.
- Provide underpinning evidence adding value to existing studies/research.
- Draw in knowledge/capacity of FE/HE and private sector training providers.
- Reflect results against national/local economic/skills strategies.
- Focus on key sectors while gaining wider perspectives and drawing out cross-cutting themes.

In planning and implementing our engagement activities we utilised our understanding of the Cumbrian business community, informed by our research into the most effective ways of communicating with and engaging Cumbrian businesses (including those harder-to-reach). Alongside email, our project team and a telemarketing company proactively telephoned businesses to engage them in the research. We publicised activity through the local media and through social media, including social media advertising. Our team engaged with a range of local groups such as Chambers of Trade, Carlisle Ambassadors, Penrith Industrial BID, etc. Key also to effective engagement were our ERB partners who have actively engaged businesses from their membership and wider contacts.

As well as their engagement, we were also keen to bring to bear the knowledge and expertise in their sectors of other ERBs. The CITB and Cumbria Tourism agreed to take an active role in research in their respective sectors. We undertook the research work directly with the manufacturing and social care sectors, as well as cross-cutting themes. Where other ERBs chose not to undertake research (land based and energy) we engaged organisations with the requisite skills and sector understanding (supported by our and other ERB engagement).

In producing this LSIP report we have achieved active, direct engagement with 670 employers, supplementing the direct engagement with 1,100 employers in our Trailblazer, which has also informed this support. Opportunities to input have been shared with thousands of businesses across the county, by us and other ERBs, as well as opportunities to comment on draft findings. We have also engaged directly and frequently with providers and other stakeholders.

Research activity has included desk research, survey, 1-2-1s and focus groups. Following the initial research phase, findings have been checked with employers and wider stakeholders, promoting this opportunity widely through email, social media and local business magazine, including through other ERBs.

Cumbria is home to four FE colleges, a university, and a range of active private sector training providers, many specialising in industries and/or occupations. The county also works particularly closely with Lancaster University and Myerscough, both located just outside the county. It has an active Work-Based Learning Provider Forum (WBLPF) which includes the key providers in the county and stakeholders such as the Council Adult Education teams, Careers Hub, Inspira and JCP/DWP.

Continuing effective engagement of providers is important to achieving an LSIP providers truly buy into and reflective of their challenges and opportunities. This was achieved through 1-2-1 meetings, group meetings and other opportunities to input and comment, including regular engagement through the WBLPF and its Executive (Cumbria Chamber was invited to join both in the light of its LSIP role at Trailblazer stage), provider representation on the Steering Group, and our role on the SDF Steering group. We have also held 1-2-1 meetings with other key stakeholders, including a series with JCP. Draft documentation has been shared for comment and input with key providers and other key stakeholders.

Other stakeholders included, for example, local authorities, LEP, Careers Hub, Inspira, JCP/DWP, All Together Cumbria, Centre for Leadership Performance, Electech Innovation Cluster, Innovate UK, Skills for Care, other business support organisations, etc.

We engage regularly through the SAP/LEP's PESSG, with a SAP/PESSG representative sitting on the Steering Group, alongside a LEP representative. The LEP Sector Panels are represented on the SAP/PESSG. We have worked closely with the SAP and LSR, using the LSR as one of our inputs. Cumbria Economic Observatory (who are also active in undertaking work on LSR) work closely with us and are on our Steering Group.

We also keep the range of stakeholders continuously updated through our LSIP website and social media pages, including opportunities to comment, contribute and read updates on actions.

Employers are not always aware of their skills needs and there are particular issues around future skills, making engagement on this with other stakeholders plus actions to help employers understand those needs even more important.

Both directly and through the LSR and other research such as the CLEP Apprenticeship Strategy we have drawn on data provided by DfE, as well as wider data and reports. This includes analysis from the Unit for Future Skills and Cumbria Economic Observatory (local authorities). We have checked for existing evidence where available and used that rather than reinventing, while still being sure to check those findings, including for currency with employers and other stakeholders. As part of this we have engaged actively with those undertaking related work in parallel e.g. around LANSS. Given the detail provided in other documents we have not sought to restate all of that in this document, but have reviewed and discussed in producing it.

We provided emerging findings for Accountability Statements to providers, have met with them to discuss

these and have been invited to comment on their draft Statements. We have been clear that we would value their input on what information they would find useful for future Statements, so that we can be sure to include this moving forward.

The LSIP has benefited from this in-depth supply side perspective. All the contributors are fully engaged with the LSIP process and there is a consensus that the LSIP focus will help to drive forward positive changes in the skills and training landscape, indeed actions are already being implemented. Views of employers, providers and other stakeholders have been fed into the findings, recommendations for change and roadmap for delivery.

Throughout the process we have sought not just to engage employers in reporting their needs and suggesting and devising potential solutions but also to raise their awareness of and engage them in opportunities to engage directly with providers, schools, etc e.g. working with Careers Hub, Inspira and C4LP in careers and engagement and activities with schools (including experience opportunities for teachers) and directly with colleges on curriculum etc. We have begun creating opportunities for dialogue and active input from employers through round tables/workshops with providers and have included further actions in our roadmap – relating to curriculum, recruitment/employment, opportunities to cooperate through making trainers/speakers available etc.

We have built on our Trailblazer findings and plan and taken an iterative approach through the roll out to date and will continue to take this approach.

We have engaged with other LSIPs, primarily through our existing links with other Chambers nationally. This includes engaging with Lancashire LSIP around offshore wind and Suffolk regarding land based. We will continue to build on this e.g. around national opportunities such as energy where we are already working with Suffolk plus northern Chambers on supply chain opportunities including skills and training.

Stage B Translating Employer Needs into Priority Changes in Provision

In developing this plan we have continued, and further developed, the iterative and inclusive process established during our Trailblazer:

- Sharing initial/emerging findings and discussing with/inviting comment from providers and other stakeholders.
- Detailed discussions with providers on how issues, challenges and opportunities can best be addressed, including any further input from employers to take these forward, including helping to shape SDF bids and delivery and moving forward LSIF.
- Creating opportunities for direct discussion between providers and employers (and other stakeholders) discuss and plan potential actions e.g. through focus groups/round tables.
- Engaging in opportunities through existing groups such as WBLPF, SAP/PESSG, Eden Skills & Employment Group.
- As member of WBLPF and its Executive and member of the SDF Steering Group.
- Engaging with providers on what further updating and additional research is needed moving forward to support change and improvement e.g. further deep dives into elements of energy opportunities, and specifics around some elements of design and delivery of apprenticeships (e.g. to drive increased completion rates).
- Provision of our Emerging Priorities document and discussion of this and their developing Accountability Statements with providers.

Providers have proved active not just in taking forward priorities for change but in working together to do so and in enhancing collaboration, (see examples 1 and 2 below).

Through this process we have developed the summary priorities and actions highlighted above and, underpinning this, a significantly more detailed table of Priorities, Issues and Challenges & Actions. This builds on that produced for our Trailblazer. We will continue to maintain this as a living document, sharing it openly through our LSIP web page.

We have worked in close alignment (since Trailblazer and SDF1 bidding stage) with the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) for Cumbria. The emerging findings and recommendations provided by the LSIP have supported development and implementation of both the SDF1 and SDF2 projects, including in aiming to meet the needs of employers and improving employer engagement with skills providers. For example the Skills Hub, the Apprenticeship Hub, curriculum development, extending the Skills Hub to wider providers, support for the WBLPF, curriculum mapping against LEP and LSIP priorities and market intelligence to identify gaps by sector.

Where gaps arise, new curriculum will be developed, in discussion with employers and considering any availability beyond this provider group. Examples of new curriculum already developed or under development include Level 4 Quality Practitioner, Level 4 Apprenticeship Construction Design & Build Technician and Sustainability courses at level 2, 3 and 4. Because this detailed work is included in the SDF, we have not sought to replicate this in the LSIP.

Providers have proved active in discussion of employer needs and their draft Accountability Statements with us. It is clear from their SDF 1 & 2 activities, Accountability Statements and approach as the Work Based Learning Provider Forum that they are genuinely committed to addressing employer needs and to working actively with employers on this. The following are just two examples but there are many others, including the Digital Accelerator being launched in July.

Example One: SDF2 Activity

The Skills Development Fund (SDF) Round 2 commenced in August 2022 and ended on 31 March 2023. Lakes College led on the project, working with partners Carlisle, Furness, Kendal College and the University of Cumbria. The aims of the project were to support the LSIP by understanding skills demands and gaps, developing and delivering new curriculum, supporting employer recruitment and barriers to entry. The project has 3 workstreams: Sustainable Construction, Low Carbon and Green Energy and Health and Social Care.

In line with the LSIP, the project included:

- Cumbria wide labour market intelligence, mapping all partner provision, identifying skills gaps and aligning with LSIP, labour market and LEP priorities. Private providers from the WBLPF were also invited to undertake this activity for a fuller picture.
- Over 300 employer training needs analysis and knowledge transfer events, undertaken to inform curriculum development.
- Targeted curriculum development following LMI activities for employers including apprenticeships, short courses, higher education and sector specific courses to support entry into industry. Courses included but were not limited to farming; environmental; managing business responses to environmental challenges; climate change distance learning; Foundation Degree Level 5

Apprenticeship in low carbon; digital professionals for care level 5; return to study for care; pre-access to care; project controls; project management apprenticeships; design, surveying and planning for construction; and T-levels in construction.

- Planning and development of a new Apprenticeship Academy, with currently 230 new learner applicants and over 150 employer apprentice vacancies.
- Employability courses for students as per LSIP recommendations. Research with employers informed employability courses to improve skills and behaviours in relation to student work readiness which will be rolled out across Cumbria.
- Planning, promotion and marketing of career events for learners including employer opportunity presentations.
- Specific employer events providing opportunities for learners in relation to apprenticeships including higher education.

The partnership collaboration successfully met all outputs and outcomes, working closely with the Chamber of Commerce and the LEP who are both members of the Steering Group. The project supported over 500 employers with capital and revenue spend directly benefitting both employers and learners by understanding employer needs and developing curriculum, underpinned by staff CPD and capital spend. Learners have also been provided with additional opportunities in relation to training and outcomes such as apprenticeships.

'The SDF project has successfully enabled us as a partnership to collaborate, invest and support employers and learners. Working together with the Chamber in relation to LSIP recommendations and the LEP; we intend to continue this work and our commitment to meeting employer and learner needs in Cumbria for the benefit of our community.' - Lakes College

Example Two: Kendal College Agricultural Training Programme

The LSIP Trailblazer Report highlighted large gaps in agricultural skills provision in Cumbria across numerous areas including livestock husbandry, animal health, tickets for machinery and business skills. Much of this demand had previously been fulfilled by Newton Rigg Agricultural College before its closure in 2021. The loss of agricultural training to the area was having a negative impact on the local farming community, with some farms struggling to recruit and retain workers with the right skills.

Informed by the findings of the LSIP, Kendal College moved to fill this gap, launching its first agricultural courses in September 2021. During the first year, the college had approximately 60 agriculture students being taught by experienced agricultural lecturers, many of whom were brought in from Newton Rigg after its closure. The launch of the programme was welcomed by the local farming community and now at the end of its second year has proved a great success, with the number of enrolled students increasing twofold.

The college's agriculture students learn through a blend of classroom and practical classes. Alongside level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships, they also gain valuable industry tickets including the Safe Use of Veterinary Medicine, Pesticide Spraying, ATV use and Telehandling. The college also offers commercial courses such as Safe Use of Sheep Dip and has full-time students on a level 1 course in Land Based Studies.

The traditional model for an agricultural college is to have a farm, run by the college, where students can get practical experience. Rather than having its own farm, Kendal College works with a group of local partner farms which provide students with locations for practical training sessions.

- While there are extra considerations involved in sending students to the partner farms, e.g. having strong biosecurity measures in place, there are also clear benefits for the students and local employers. For example, students have the opportunity to work directly with employers and get exposure to a wide range of best practices, different technologies and farming methods.

Kendal College continues to develop its agricultural provision with the recent opening of satellite centre in Wigton, West Cumbria, aimed at apprentices who live too far from the college to commute. In September, the college plans to introduce the T-level in Agriculture, making it in the first wave of providers to do so.

"Kendal College is really proud that we have responded to the local need for a Cumbrian Based Agricultural provision, as highlighted in the LSIP 2022 report.

With the support of local farming businesses, parents and agricultural students our provision has grown quickly and has been a real success. We have plans for future growth, and are looking forward to continuing to work with the agricultural community to meet their training needs." - Kendal College

Stage C Addressing Business Demand and Employer Engagement

Cumbria's LSIP, through Trailblazer development and now in national roll out, has benefited and continues to benefit from active and strong relationships between providers and key stakeholders which we will continue to develop and enhance. This is further supported by the active engagement of ERBs with employers and employer/provider engagement which we continue to work together to build further. This is providing a robust base on which to deliver and continue to build. Stakeholders have proved keen to work together to benefit employers and Cumbria as a whole, and actively committed to doing so and this has proven in practice.

C.1 Embedding Greater Employer Engagement and New Ways of Working

Continuing to build on work begun under our LSIP Trailblazer and SDF1, this is being achieved as follows:

- Providers have already taken forward recommendations from our Trailblazer and emerging findings during production of this current report, for example through SDF1 and SDF2 (Skills Hub, Apprenticeship Hub, social care events, green energy TNAs, support to the WBLPF and more), design of Bootcamp provision, introduction and design of land based provision. They have demonstrated their genuine commitment to continuing to do this and report that they are already reaping the benefits. They have not only used our Emerging Priorities document in production of their Accountability Statements but have discussed their plans with us and consulted us on their draft statements, and intend to continue this moving forward.
- We have included employer representation in our LSIP Steering Group and are now adding a further two employer representatives. Employers are also represented indirectly through an ERB representative.
- The LSIP ERB Group, which sits alongside the Steering Group, includes the key ERBs covering the county.
- The programme of sector focus groups which we have used in this research to date, including employers and providers. We are continuing and expanding these moving forward and will be supporting through short, targeted pre and post research on specific topics to be discussed/that have been discussed at these meetings. These will be held quarterly moving forward and cover each LSIP key sector.
- We have undertaken and will continue to undertake employer surveys, and use our experience to draw

in responses from harder-to reach businesses.

- As with all of our LSIP activities to date we will continue to target for a mix of representation rather than relying on volunteers and the usual suspects.
- An LSIP project team member is now Vice Chair of the WBLPF, having been invited to join the Group and Executive because of LSIP, and the WBLPF is now planning, for example:
 - Regular “focus on” meetings, where relevant supported by specific pre-research (and where relevant post-research) by the LSIP bringing to bear the views and needs of wider groups of employers, bringing together forum members and others including employers, ERBs and/or other stakeholders/initiatives as relevant. These are expected to cover e.g. focus on clean energy/carbon reduction, the visitor economy, in-work progression, disability. The intention is to ensure the whole is greater than the parts, bringing to bear our combined activities, engagement and resources in IAG, Bootcamps, Multiply, apprenticeships, other training, disability support, job seekers and in work progression and more.
 - WBLPF “Annual Conference” bringing together employers with providers and other stakeholders to share and discuss impact, initiatives, challenges and opportunities and to network.
 - Identifying, discussing and progressing opportunities to better address employer needs.
- As with LSIP surveys to date we will include in each survey the opportunity for employers to ask for more information on a range of relevant topics and services (e.g. Careers Hub, JCP, Apprenticeships, T levels) and make relevant referrals. From the most recent survey alone we have made 676 referrals.
- We have introduced a quarterly LSIP Insight e-newsletter, which we are using to promote skills development opportunities to businesses, share good news stories, update on LSIP progress, enhance understanding of development routes, etc.
- In the light of LSIP we have embedded participation of providers in our networking events, to support relationship building between employers and providers. This includes, for example, our quarterly Power 40 events for medium and large employers and Business Bites for all employers.
- Building on 1-2-1s undertaken we are implementing a programme of calls with employers during the year for updating and additional information. This will include targeting harder to reach employers, as we have done in this round of research.
- We will continue to use routes such as our LSIP LinkedIn page, other social media, podcasts and videos to engage employers and encourage discussion.
- Discussions aimed at establishing a holistic approach to skills and education, beyond FE (see 3.1.13.3 above).
- Through these means we are also linking employers with other stakeholders such as Inspira (IAG), Careers Hub, JCP, Armed Forces Covenant, HMP Haverigg and InnovateUK.

C.2 Strengthening Employer Engagement and Investment in Skills, Especially Those That Struggle Most to Engage Effectively

We have and will continue to do this through, for example:

- The activities listed in C.1 above, in particular proactively targeting harder to reach employers for engagement. For example, through the targeted calls and surveys we can include the voice of more smaller employers in discussions, who are less likely to participate in focus groups or other forums.
- Engaging and supporting care employers to complete the Skills for Care Dataset.

C.3 Helping Ensure People are Connected to Opportunities to Get Good Jobs and Progress

We are working and will work with the LEP, Local Authorities, JCP, Inspira (CEIAG), disability employment bodies etc. to help ensure people connected to opportunities to get good jobs and progress, through, for

example, the following activities:

- The LEP, Careers Hub and Local Authorities are included in the LSIP Steering Group.
- We are actively engagement with the LEP's SAP/PESSG which includes also Local Authorities, JCP, Inspira, etc.
- We are actively engaged in the WBLPF and Forum activities moving forward will include this as a theme for a "focus on" to which we will also invite relevant additional representatives (such as disability groups). The WBLPF includes representatives of colleges, UoC, Adult Education, private sector providers, JCP, Inspira, Bootcamps, etc.
- We will continue research and engagement actively promoting people with disabilities and long term health conditions for employment and progression. This will continue, for example, articles in LSIP Insight promoting JCP support, Disability Confident etc. and seeking referrals in research (676 were made from our latest survey alone).
- We are a Disability Confident Leader and as such have been actively engaged for some years in promoting disability employment and progression, which we continue to do and build. This includes encouraging other employers to get involved in Disability Confident and take advantage of opportunities such as Disability Connect mentoring.
- We are now actively engaged with the new DWP Cumbria & Lancashire Progression Lead and have agreed to work together to support progression through actions such as sharing existing and newly developed employer facing resources, providing opportunities to network directly with businesses.
- Working with providers and employers to ensure staff have the basic skills to enable them to progress.

C.4 Promoting Employer Involvement Through IAG or Work Placements and Ensuring Employer Needs are Fed into CEIAG

We are and will continue to do this through, for example:

- Including the Careers Hub in the LSIP Steering Group and coordinating this activity through the Careers Hub.
- Engaging actively with the LEP's SAP/PESSG, which includes Inspira, the Careers Hub, Centre for Leadership Performance, who are all actively engaged in this.
- Engaging actively in the WBLPF (which includes also the Careers Hub and Inspira) and ensuring employer needs fed in though presentations feeding back on research, "focus ons" etc.
- Seeking specific requests for more information and offers to get involved, including offering work placements, through our research and engagement (for example the latest survey resulted in 37 referrals to the Careers Hub alone).
- Active promotion through routes such as LSIP Insight e-newsletter, podcasts, social media, LSIP project team calls with businesses, etc.
- Addressing employer needs in research activity and feeding this through into CEIAG.
- Supporting and encouraging participation in the actions highlighted in 3.1.1 above.

C.5 Including People From Disadvantaged Backgrounds and With Disabilities as Part of the Solution to Skills Shortages

We are and will be doing this through:

- Actions around disability highlighted in C.3 above.
- An agreement with the WBLPF to formulate specific plans around care leavers and reducing the discrepancy in NEETs.
- Working with employers/providers to explore how best to move people through from specialist provision, such as that provided by Westhouse, to other employment.
- Working with stakeholders such as local authorities, JCP and Bootcamp deliverers to target areas

of deprivation and worklessness. For example our LSIP partner Cumbria Tourism is developing programmes to support people into guaranteed interviews and hopefully jobs in the visitor economy.

- Working with and as part of HMP Haverigg Employment Advisory Board and actively encouraging and supporting more employers to consider the opportunities of employing prisoner on Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and prison leavers. For example sharing information and good news stories in the LSIP Insight e-newsletter, arranging visits to the prison to meet prisoners and arranging for relevant prison staff to participate in employer meetings.
- Using opportunities such as the LSIP Insight e-newsletter and events to promote JCP support to businesses.

C.6 Working with LEPs, Local Authorities and Others to Raise Employer Demand For and Make Better Use of Higher Skills

We are doing this through, for example:

- Actions to help employers to understand future technology opportunities and related skills needs (see 3.1.12 above).
- Energy and low carbon research and energy deep dives (undertaken, with more deep dives intended).
- WBLPF “focus-ons”, bringing in employers and other stakeholders to work together on issues, which will extend to higher skills.
- Enhancing business engagement with InnovateUK, universities, Catapults, and business support delivery through a range of communications, events and referrals.
- Promoting and supporting further development of degree apprenticeships.
- Working with relevant stakeholders (including providers) to support inward investment through coordinated activity encompassing recruitment, skills and wider needs, with an example of proposed activity provided in 3.1.11 above.
- Raising awareness and understanding through e.g. WBLPF annual conference, LSIP Insight e-newsletter, case studies, social media, ongoing 1-2-1 discussions, other events, podcasts, etc.
- Working collaboratively with Cumbria LEP and others in relation to the LEP’s Apprenticeship Strategy, including Degree Apprenticeships.
- Seeking, with relevant stakeholders to establish a holistic approach, covering the full skills and education remit, as highlighted in 3.1.13.3 above.
- Working actively with the Careers Hub as set out in 3.1.1 above.

There is a specific issue/opportunity around clean energy which we will look, with relevant stakeholders to review and address. It is apparent that local young people taking the academic post-16 pathway currently lack a via HE course offer in the core engineering degree subjects that relate to clean energy. Local colleges and Gen2 already have 600 higher education students (as of 2019-20) studying courses at level 4 above in engineering and manufacturing technologies. However feedback indicates that much of that provision is employer sponsored, rather than the more conventional learner-responsive HE model. The University of Cumbria does not deliver higher education engineering programmes but the creation of a new Institute of Engineering, Computing and Advanced Manufacturing at the University, part of a new campus in Barrow, offers an opportunity to change that. Given the high number of level 6 occupations already in demand from the energy sector in Cumbria and the likelihood that this will continue as green energy grows in the county, there appears to be an opportunity for the university to develop a local offer for employers and learners focused on the major engineering disciplines: electrical, mechanical, construction.

ANNEX C

EVIDENCE SOURCES

In producing this iteration of our LSIP, key evidence sources used include:

- Cumbria LSIP Trailblazer, Cumbria Chamber, 2022
- Local Skills Report, Cumbria LEP, 2022 and 2023 updates
- Cumbria Apprenticeship Strategy, Cumbria LEP, 2023
- CITB Driving Construction Skills, Growth & Jobs Through Local Skills Improvement Plans 2022
- Cumbria Offshore Wind, Thomas Jardine & Co and The Green Edge for Cumbria LSIP, 2023
- Primary research by Cumbria Tourism involving employers, providers and other stakeholders
- Primary research by CITB involving employers, providers and other stakeholders
- Primary research by Cumbria Chamber, involving employers, providers and other stakeholders
- Land based & Allied Sectors Report for Cumbria LSIP, 2023, by Enviromentors
- Cumbria Clean Energy: Workforce Skills Requirements, for Cumbria LSIP, 2023, by Energus and Think
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- Stakeholders consulted, in addition to employers, partner ERBs and providers, include, for example:

Inspira, Careers Hub, Cumbria LEP, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Cumbria Woodlands, Natural England, LANTRA, DWP/JCP, Institute of Agriculture and Horticulture, Skills for Care, Westmorland & Furness Council, Cumberland Council, Cumbria Action for Sustainability, The Rivers Trust, Institute of Agricultural Engineers, Royal Forestry Society, Ernest Cook Trust, Lake District National Park Authority, ECITB, and others.

Around 1,100 employers engaged actively in the Trailblazer phase, with that input feeding through into this latest report, and approximately 670 in this phase.

Partner ERBs participating in this LSIP are Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster, CBI, CITB, Country Land & Business Association, Cumbria Tourism, National Farmers' Union and The Farmer Network.

We consider the above to be robust and meaningful to the development of the LSIP given in particular:

- The depth of research with 1,100 in our Trailblazer research and 670 in this phase.
- That we proactively contacted employers to input into this research, going beyond the established networks of ERB partners, rather than leaving it purely to those who chose to participate and the usual suspects.
- The range of wider stakeholders engaged, particularly important where employers are less clear on needs, in particular emerging/future needs.
- The range of literature reviewed for emerging/future needs.
- The range of ERB partners actively engaged, covering the range of sectors and bringing their specialist knowledge and engagement.
- The very positive response to the draft report across the range of key stakeholders.

ANNEX D

SUPPORTING NET ZERO TARGETS, ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

In producing this LSIP we have considered the skills, capabilities and expertise required in relation to jobs that directly contribute to or indirectly support Net Zero targets, adaptation to Climate Change or meet other environmental goals, including:

- Specific focus as one of our sectors on the energy sector, and in particular clean energy (nuclear, wind, solar, hydrogen and CCUS and community energy options), and an area of significant growth opportunity.
- Specific focus on as one of our sectors on land based, in which there are not only significant opportunities to support environmental goals but particular driver on the sector from Government (not least in farming) to do so. Given the changes of approach that will be needed in many elements of land based and the challenges they bring, skills development is particularly essential.
- Specific focus as one of our sectors on construction, where there will increasingly be need and opportunity for use of new techniques to supporting environmental goals, and for retrofit in existing properties.
- In addition to these sector specifics above, we have also considered wider carbon reduction understanding, management and implementation across sectors.