

WEST OF ENGLAND EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLAN

**WEST OF
ENGLAND**
Combined Authority



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FOREWORD



The West of England is an amazing place to live, work and grow up in. It is a thriving region with beautiful rural areas, alongside bustling towns and two great cities.

Employment here is strong, with many residents able to find the work and training opportunities they need to succeed.

But work in the region is changing. Traditional sectors like manufacturing, construction and transport are having to adapt to the urgent need to tackle the climate and ecological emergency we all face. New digital technologies like artificial intelligence and automation mean that the jobs of tomorrow will look very different from the jobs of today, and will require workers with completely different skillsets. Meanwhile, people working in some of the West of England's largest sectors, like our world-leading creative industries, continue to be deeply affected by the after-effects of the pandemic and the current cost-of-living crisis.

Over the past two years, the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority, which I lead, has built a significant jobs and training offer for local people, with the value of our services trebling from £20m to £60m. I'm proud of this work. We are helping over 10,000 people in our region every year – through adult education, training courses

and careers support – all the way from school age to adults in work looking for opportunities to change direction. And we have created the first-ever West of England 'Good Employment Charter', rewarding and encouraging businesses to do the right thing by their workers.

But the skills system remains too complicated and difficult to navigate, meaning those who could gain the most from the training available are missing out. That's why, when I became Metro Mayor, I was clear that I wanted to see a real focus on simplifying and improving access for residents, and businesses, to ensure everyone can benefit from the brilliant options out there. I am proud that through this Plan, we will introduce a new single regional jobs, careers, and training support service – Skills Connect – which will help an extra 3,000 people every year to upskill, progress in work and find new opportunities.






Alongside this, I am establishing a new Mayoral Priority Skills Fund which will help the region to respond more flexibly to new skills challenges and opportunities. As we have seen most recently, through the Mayoral Combined Authority's work to address the national HGV and bus driver shortages impacting locally, a concerted effort can lead to positive results, and I am keen we build on this work and apply it across a whole range of sectors where we are hearing concerns. My Climate and Ecological Strategy Action Plan sets out an ambition to bring 23,000 new green jobs

to the region as we seek to reduce emissions by 10% each year by 2030. Our regional training offer is fundamental to this and will need to scale-up rapidly to ensure local people can access these skilled jobs of the future. We are making real progress. We are training more people for new roles in areas like construction and retrofit – which are vital as we look to hit our ambitious net-zero targets locally. But much more is needed, and this Plan sets out how we will go even further, faster.

Of course, we cannot deliver this Plan in isolation – our Trade Unions, our schools, further education colleges, universities and employers all have an important role to play. We also need government to do much, much more – and I will continue relentlessly to make our case to ensure we have the long-term funding and levers we need to build a fully devolved, West of England Employment Service – one helping our region create and retain the decent jobs of tomorrow, and which works for all our residents, wherever they live. I'm hugely proud of the West of England. I know that together we can make a real difference for our residents, employers, and communities. Let's get to it and show our country and the world how it can be done.

Dan Norris

West of England Metro Mayor

Labour Market Snapshot	Our Priorities	Outcomes we want to achieve
<p>1,171,000+ residents in region</p> <p>21% of young people in the region (aged 0-18)</p> <p>630,000+ employee jobs in the region</p> <p>80,000+ self-employed residents</p> <p>46,000+ business in the region.</p> <p>97 secondary schools/ college in the region</p> <p>50.5% of residents have a higher education qualification (LEP Area)</p>	 <p>Strengthen and simplify the employment and skills system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger regional systems leadership • A more coherent and responsive employment and skills system • Simpler access to skills, employment support and progression for all
	 <p>Enable all young people to achieve their potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More young people achieve positive and sustained destinations, especially those facing the greatest barriers and challenges. • More young people participating in apprenticeships and technical education opportunities and pathways • More young people progressing to education or training at level 4 or higher (such as degrees, higher apprenticeships and higher national diplomas)
	 <p>Support unemployed and inactive people into work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More unemployed and inactive people supported into work • More people facing complex barriers supported to re-engage in education and employment pathways • More unemployed/ inactive people having career development skills and engaged with lifelong learning • More inclusive and equitable employers
<p>Some Key Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly fragmented skills system (300+ support and training offers) • 6% of 16-17 year olds are NEETs (/activity not known) • 2.6% of residents are unemployed (aged 16-64) • 18.1% of residents are inactive (aged 16-64) • 14.8% of people earning less than the Real Living Wage (as defined by the Living Wage Foundation) • In 2021/22 7000+ residents started an apprenticeship (LEP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2% in educational subjects - 1% in creative subjects - 8% in construction subjects 	 <p>Support people to progress in work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people working in decent jobs which offer good rates of pay, flexibility and opportunities for progression • More people taking up training opportunities aligned with regional skills needs • More people achieving technical and professional skills • More people 25 years and over taking up apprenticeship opportunities
	 <p>Address employer needs and skills gaps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More businesses having the skills and talent they need to thrive • More businesses training their staff, supporting retention and creating opportunities for progression • More businesses engaging in the codesign and co-delivery of education and training provision • A greater number and variety of businesses adopting apprenticeships • A more inclusive regional workforce

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The West of England produced its first comprehensive and ambitious Employment and Skills Plan in 2019, which was based on a thorough review of the evidence available at that time.

Massive progress has been made in delivering the 2019 Plan, which is summarised below; however, the pandemic, Brexit, cost of living crisis, and technological and digital advances, are changing the regional landscape. This Plan provides a refreshed view of our current regional skills needs and objectives and sets out how we will address them.

A diverse well skilled workforce is fundamental for employers in the West of England to improve their productivity, grow and, ultimately, create more good quality jobs for our residents. This Plan sets out our collective regional ambition for employment and skills over the coming 3-5 years and it will act as the reference point and strategic guide for investment and delivery. Developed with national, regional, and local partners, it is underpinned by the latest available evidence on how the region's labour market is performing comparatively, including its strengths and weaknesses, and emerging issues and opportunities.

This Plan sets out the longer term strategic ambition for skills, training and employment and the key focus for support, but given the likely continued rapid pace of change and economic uncertainty over coming months and years, we will develop an annual delivery plan to sit behind this Plan which is flexible and responsive. That way, we will be able to retain our shared collective vision and understanding of longer-term objectives, while flexing our approach to meet emerging and changing needs. We will review and report progress against the delivery plan annually.

The Plan aligns with and supports the implementation of broader regional priorities and strategies including:

- The West of England Mayor's priorities
- A new Regional Economic Resilience Strategy
- Climate and Ecological Strategy & Action Plan (CESAP)
- West of England Cultural Plan
- Emerging Plan for Innovation and Digital Plan
- Sub-regional plans published by local partners
- The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)



- This is the West of England Combined Authority's regional Employment and Skills Plan. The scope of the Plan covers the West of England functional economic area; however, delivery of the majority of employment and skills activity will be within the Combined Authority area covering Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

PROGRESS

The Combined Authority and its partners have made huge inroads in key priority areas for the region. We have:

Secured over £11m additional funds for skills bootcamps, helping employers deliver short, sharp training in areas of greatest demand – digital, construction, welding, retrofit, health, and management;

- Supported over 3,500 people to progress in work, helping to combat precarious work and the cost-of-living crisis;
- Helped employers with their skills needs, and established an apprenticeship investment and support service which has retained over £2m of apprenticeship levy in the region which can be used by smaller employers to meet their apprenticeship needs;
- Launched the Mayor's Good Employment Charter, supporting employers to become even better at recruiting, supporting, and retaining their staff;
- Promoted green skills as a career path and funded training for specialist roles such as retrofit, organisational sustainability, environmental data science, green technologies, and modern methods of construction;
- Established specialist training for HGV and bus drivers to support a critical shortage;
- Reformed our Adult Education Budget provision to improve alignment with local priorities and better equip residents with the skills they need to progress into and within work;
- Put in place new support in response to the impact including recruitment support in tourism and hospitality, a Digital Skills Programme, and a new Community Support Fund
- Launched Multiply, a multimillion-pound programme which will help drive up maths and numeracy sought by many employers;
- Established a range of school and college-based initiatives, to better prepare young people for their next best step and achieve their potential, with a focus on green careers;
- Worked with all partners, including trade unions, our local authorities, and business networks, to establish a shared understanding of our changing economy and find collective solutions; and
- Taken the first important steps to raise the visibility of existing provision in the region by mapping employment and skills provision in the region and made this available via an online search function. The precursor to our fully fledged Skills Connect service.

32,500+
residents supported
comprising:

15,600+
employed residents

12,000+
unemployed residents

100
people at risk of NEET

97
schools and colleges

OUR STRATEGY

Having reviewed the evidence base and engaged with our partners, we have concluded that our five strategic objectives remain broadly the right ones.


We recognise, however, that digital and green skills are so important to the future of our

economy, that they must be integrated into all our objectives and actions. Therefore, we have shown green and digital skills as a cross cutting theme throughout the remainder of the strategy and will ensure our delivery aligns with other regional plans supporting these objectives. It is also recognised that given

the relative strength of the region's labour market and low unemployment, that a stronger emphasis should be placed on helping people already in work to progress and fulfil their productive potential. This is reflected in the mix of actions included throughout the Plan.

Bring secure and fairly paid jobs to the region including green jobs, working with trade unions, local employers, skills providers and others to help residents access opportunities.

Our objectives



Strengthen and simplify the skills system



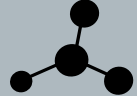
Enable all young people to achieve their potential



Support unemployed and inactive people into work



Support people to progress in work



Address employer needs and skills shortages

Our cross cutting themes...



Improve digital skills at all levels



Deliver green skills for our low carbon transition

The Challenge

Despite progress and the region continuing to see above average levels of productivity, low rates of unemployment, and a highly skilled workforce, structural challenges remain, and these have been exacerbated by wider national and international economic uncertainty.

For instance:

- Skills miss-matches with skills shortages in some sectors, but also within geographic and demographic communities where individuals struggle to access opportunities;
- Low pay, particularly for part time workers, and insecure employment;
- Wage and occupational inequality and lack of progression in work;
- Growing polarisation between higher and lower skilled occupations;
- Unequal educational attainment in schools, particularly for disadvantaged children;
- High numbers of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in parts of the area;
- Some reduction of over 50's in the labour market including those who have not returned following Covid;

- Greater difficulty for those with special education needs to gain work experience and employment;
- Lower than average progression to higher level learning;
- Low awareness and participation in apprenticeship opportunities;
- Low uptake of apprenticeships as a route to talent supply/development within certain key industrial sectors
- Geographical inequalities, including health and wellbeing, and some deprivation.

The Covid pandemic also created new challenges. In the short-term, the economic and social impacts hit some groups harder than others and widened existing regional inequalities. Whilst the recovery was faster than expected the scarring effect on these groups leaves a legacy which needs addressing. The pandemic also changed the face of employment, for instance, it caused a rise in unemployment and economic inactivity amongst older workers and increased health-related barriers to work. Young people missed out on work experience opportunities and the social elements of joining a new workplace, and many struggled. Data suggests that the economic crisis is similarly impacting many of our residents.

The sectoral impact of the pandemic was also uneven with some sectors, such as aerospace, retail, hospitality and tourism, placed under greater pressure than others. Whilst the long-term impact remains to be seen, it is likely that some of these sectoral changes will be permanent, and that the shift to new technologies has been hastened.

The speed of digital transformation is a particularly pressing challenge, in terms of upskilling as well as keeping technology up to date. Digital skills are now essential to participate in all aspects of society as well as to support wider digital growth (57% of digital jobs are found in non-digital sectors). We have great resources to address these challenges in the West of England, including the Institute of Technology, the Digital Engineering Technology and Innovation (DETI) programme, HE and FE provision, but we need to ensure that digital provision is a cross cutting theme throughout our provision.

The pandemic also saw an upsurge in home working, which has become the new normal for many. Whilst home working offers many advantages the full impact on the world of work may be significant and may not yet be fully understood.

At time of publishing this Plan, we estimate that around 285,000 jobs will need to be filled over the next 15 years across the following key sectors: Advanced Engineering and Aerospace; Construction; Creative and Digital; Health; Professional Services; and Tourism, Culture and Hospitality. Our Post 16 Research indicates that providers are already experiencing excess demand for courses related to these sectors and that certain apprenticeship courses are over-subscribed. Furthermore, increased demand due to population growth is putting a strain on the region's providers. The research also highlights concerns that transport networks do not currently support travel to learn and raised the question of how specialist learning facilities should best be provided.ⁱ

National employment and skills initiatives provide opportunities to resource some of the region's priorities (e.g. the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Multiply, National Skills Fund etc). However, the complex nature of the skills ecosystem, partly stemming from departmental silos at national level, as well as the short-term nature of

the funding streams and inflexibility in some of the funded programmes, is a barrier to achieving local skills and employment objectives. Further devolution of skills and employment support is critical.

In addition to upskilling and providing the best possible local talent for our employers, we also need to recognise the opportunity to attract new employers to the region through targeted inward investment. Access to people, alongside technology and markets/customers is always a fundamental driver of investment decisions. Maintaining an up to date, progressive and future focussed workforce will enable the West of England to compete for global opportunities.

Green Skills

The West of England has set an ambitious goal to be net zero carbon by 2030. To achieve this target, a further 50,383 total net retrofit jobs would be required. Currently, low carbon jobs equate to less than 1% of all jobs in the region. At the current pace of installations in West of England Combined Authority, it would take around 557 years to install the required solid wall insulation and 857 years for the required heat pumps!

The Mayor's priority to create 23,000 Green jobs therefore represents a significant opportunity for people to upskill and retrain. However, uncertainty regarding the demand and supply of green skills creates a barrier to the development of courses. Neither employers nor providers fully understand the green skills required in the future and therefore both, for the time being, are focusing on "known" issues – which tend to be around existing technology and not around future zero-emission requirements.

The launch of initiatives under the £50m Green Recovery Fund (such as the Retrofit Accelerator and Low Carbon Challenge Fund) will help to stimulate the market. Alongside these demand stimulation measures Green Skills elements have also been integrated into flagship programmes such as Workforce for the Future, the Careers Hub/Green Futures Fund, Skills Bootcamps, Community Support Fund and Adult Education. Green skills signposting will also form an integral part of the Skills Connect service.

Principles

In delivering a regional plan, we recognise that we are part of a much bigger employment and skills ecosystem, and our partners play a vital role in delivering regional objectives deploying their own range of resources.

In working towards the vision in this plan, we will work closely with our partners in the spirit of co-design and genuine partnership working, which recognises the different challenges facing different parts of the region.

We will also work closely with our partners when monitoring progress and developing annual delivery plans to ensure these align fully with the needs of the region. The mechanisms for this are detailed later in the plan.

As we co-design activities, we will:

- **Focus on people** – placing the aspirations of residents and employees at the heart of all activities;
- **Deliver for businesses** – engaging employers and placing them upfront and central to skills and workforce development;
- **Be intelligence led** – enabling informed, evidence-based decisions to be made that address the area's challenges whilst maximising opportunities;
- **Build on good practice** – learning from each other but also innovating and being open-minded to exploring ideas and new ways of working from elsewhere;
- **Build on existing services/assets** – collaborating, utilising and enhancing existing high-quality services and assets rather than re-inventing provision;
- **Create positive outcomes** – delivering meaningful benefits, progression and sustainable social value for residents, employers and communities;
- **Champion equality, diversity and inclusion** – ensuring everyone understands and benefits from opportunity, regardless of their personal circumstances or location in the region.

1. Strengthen and simplify the employment and skills system

Why is this important to us?

Tens of thousands of our residents engage with different parts of the employment and skills system each year. 'The system' is complicated and involves a plethora of institutions and organisations who are working hard to achieve the best outcomes for our residents, young and old. These include:

- Schools, colleges and universities;
- Trades Unions;
- Employers, sector and network bodies
- Independent Training Providers (ITPs);
- Providers of key national services such as the National Careers Service;
- Charities and social enterprises;
- Government departments and agencies;

...and many more.

Provision ranges from multi-million-pound mainstream services to small scale, localised and often short-term initiatives which address specific gaps/needs. The Combined Authority's skills website currently lists 226 support services. We need to work collaboratively to create the best join up for our individuals and better enable access to skills development for our employers. We also need to harness opportunity to build on social value through procurement and other mechanisms. Much has already been done but there is more to do to ensure that:

- Individuals can find and move between provision that is right for them;
- Opportunities to cross-refer individuals and participants are maximised leading to more people accessing training and accessing decent jobs;
- Education meets the needs of the economy;
- Collaboration is maximised, based on feedback and evidence; and
- The system can react quickly to new and emerging skills needs

Where are we now?

Since the first plan was published, we have made many inroads to building and simplifying the skills landscape. We have:

- Undertaken development work with trade unions and other partners, to establish the scope for Skills Connect – a single regional jobs, careers and training support service;
- Delivered the Metro Mayor's Annual Jobs and Skills Summit to better understand priority skills needs among our residents;
- Put in place fast, responsive provision where need has been identified, for example, HGV/bus drivers, hospitality and retrofit (precursors to the Mayoral Priority Skills Fund)
- Established the Skills Advisory Panel to bring employer voices to the table, publishing an Annual Skills Report to frame the challenge and monitor progress;
- Commissioned and published reports to help position our support including the Post 16 Education and Skills Infrastructure Review; the Retrofit Skills Report; and the Green Skills Report; and
- Supported and influenced the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan which captures employer voice on skills.

Outcomes and action framework



1. Strengthen and simplify the employment and skills system

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger regional systems leadership • A more coherent and responsive employment and skills system • Simpler access to skills, employment support, and progression for all 	<p>Convening partners and working together to plan provision to ensure the best outcomes for people, employers and our economy</p> <p>Ensuring different initiatives communicate and complement one another</p>	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate high quality Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) and research so that we all understand emerging employment and skills challenges • Convene forums to develop innovative solutions and plans to address emerging challenges and skills needs • Direct and influence Combined Authority funding decisions to deliver the objectives set out in this plan • Link the employment and skills system to sector-based employers through the Skills Advisory Panel, Local Skills Improvement Plan and Growth Hub (the Combined Authority’s Business Support Service) • Work closely with partners to align activity across the region and minimise duplication 	<p>The introduction of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) will provide a level of granular evidence from employers about certain skills issues they face. These may be cross-cutting, sectorial or relate to a particular job function(s)</p> <p>Maintain close contact & information exchange with us over delivery of key services in the region e.g. Restart, National Careers Service, Work & Heath Programme</p> <p>Participate actively in the Skills Advisory Panel or other oversight mechanisms</p>

Outcomes and action framework



1. Strengthen and simplify the employment and skills system


The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	As above.	Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Skills Connect with an easy to navigate search function and 1:1 coaching support to deliver a simplified skills service • Use our Mayoral Priority Skills fund to meet gaps and opportunities identified and quickly mobilise support • Build stronger connections with employees by working in close partnership with trade unions • Use intelligence generated through Skills Connect to spot gaps in training or new market need, while minimising duplication • Review the composition of the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP), including trade union representation, to ensure it becomes the overarching regional governance mechanism for managing and building the skills ecosystem focussed on delivery • Continue to develop social value approaches related to skills activity which maximise benefits for our residents. • Maintain and improve the Labour Market Intelligence Skills dashboard and build an annual delivery plan to ensure this plan is adapted each year to emerging needs • Bring together funding bodies and providers to develop solutions to ensure people are not disadvantaged by overly rigid criteria for support • Via Skills Connect, improve our communication channels with skills campaigns that raise awareness of sources of support available 	



Outcomes and action framework



1. Strengthen and simplify the employment and skills system

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	Leveraging funding and resources	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek further devolution of skills and employment funding to provide more regional flexibility and autonomy, including funding for FE estate improvement and strategic expansion • Work with other Mayoral Combined Authorities to share best practice, leverage additional funding and resources and influence national employment and skills policies • Work with partners to identify and secure funding opportunities 	Partners are asked to identify sources of additional funding against our Mayoral Priority Skills fund, to leverage increased funding
	Levering employment and skills outcomes through public sector procurement and the Social Value Act	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our buying power of services commissioned improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the region, in line with Combined Authority measures, including building green social value • Promote social value measuring tools (as successfully trialled as part of the Community Support Fund delivery), monitoring and evaluation. This is linked to digital badging to recognise additional value delivered via projects. 	
		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify good practice approaches in leveraging employment and skills outcomes through public sector procurement and share with public sector partners 	

Outcomes and action framework			
 1. Strengthen and simplify the employment and skills system			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	Addressing wider barriers to education and employment such as transport and childcare	Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make education more accessible by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influencing the development of transport policy with the provision of labour market/education intelligence - Working with providers to plan the location of provision - Where possible, support travel or other costs to enable individuals to participate in learning 	

Outcomes and action framework			
Cross cutting themes			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
Improve digital skills for life and work 	Integrating digital skills solutions into the system	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate digital skills into a wide range of our employment and skills programmes, guidance and support – identifying progression routes via various projects and programmes 	
		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with education providers and employers to identify local digital-skills gaps and develop focused solutions and simplified progression pathways into key digital roles • Increase the visibility and understanding of digital skills training opportunities through Skills Connect • Continue to facilitate digital progression pathways via the programmes we deliver and projects we procure up to and including level 6 	
People will be able to understand and follow pathways into green jobs 	Developing green skills pathways	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate green skills into a wide range of Combined Authority employment and skills programmes, guidance and support and ensure that these are easily navigable via Skills Connect 	

Outcomes and action framework			
Cross cutting themes			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	As above.	<p>Going forward, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to focus on embedding low carbon approaches and green skills training into all new skills programmes that we develop as well as focusing on developing specialist green skills (e.g. Retrofit) • Improve focus on green skills in all existing provision e.g. signposting in Future Bright, ringfencing (subject to agreement) a budget within AEB to be exclusively utilised in support of green skills • Work with education providers and employers to develop clear and simplified progression pathways for 'frontline' green roles (e.g. Green Futures Fund, commissioning strategies such as AEB and bootcamps etc)) • Work via the Mayor's Good Employment Charter and other business engagement routes to understand the emerging green skills demand from employers and ensure green job functions are incorporated into business activities • Support the green skills demand that is generated via specialist programmes where need emerges 	

1. Case Study

skills CONNECT

In the West of England, there are more than 250 support programmes and initiatives offering help to people to develop the skills and training they need to progress into and within work. This is far too complicated for anyone to navigate, meaning that those who could gain the most from the training available are missing out.

We aim to simplify this to make it easier for people to find and access the support they need. So we are creating Skills Connect which will simplify the skills and training landscape by drawing together available support into one place making it easier for individuals to find provision that suits their needs and aspirations. Skills Connect will comprise a central website which will be fully searchable and user intuitive; and for those still needing a little extra help, a network of expert advisors and coaches will be available through the Local Authorities to provide tailored one to one support to help people move on and into work.



2. Enable all young people to achieve their potential

Why is this important to us?

The region's young people are its future. We need to equip all our young people with the tools they will need throughout their working lives, to progress within education and ultimately benefit from the decent job opportunities that are available in our region as well as the jobs that will exist in the future.

As one of the most productive UK regions outside of London, we have exciting opportunities in a wide range of sectors including engineering, technology, creative and professional services, alongside major employment sectors like care, education, and hospitality. Key to this is good quality careers education information advice and guidance (CEIAG), which involves both parents/carers and employers, as well as ensuring young people have the skills needed to access these opportunities. Equally, we must bring greater support to those who struggle to engage with learning or work. We know that those with disabilities or a difficult start in life are far less likely to participate in learning and work and have fewer positive outcomes than others – this needs to be addressed so that all our young people know how to access the support they need. Skills Connect will bring this information together under one umbrella for the first time.

We also recognise that our labour market is changing rapidly and the jobs we see today, may not be the jobs of tomorrow – so we need to equip our young people with the ability to adapt and respond to a rapidly changing jobs market.

Specific challenges within this objective area include:

- The disruption to young people's education caused by the pandemic;
- Lower than average educational attainment, particularly for disadvantaged children;
- Increasing difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers;
- The need to continue to support young people to transition positively between pre and post 16 education
- Higher than average numbers of young people NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in parts of the area and for particular groups;
- Lower than average progression to Higher Education in parts of the region and for particular groups;
- Variable graduate retention across the region;




- A decrease in the number of young people starting and/or completing apprenticeships in the last three years;
- Variable delivery of Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) between areas and schools;
- Increasing mental health issues amongst young people; and
- Tackling specific barriers faced by disadvantaged young people.


Where are we now?


Since our first plan was developed, we have fully established the Careers Hub which is now working with all secondary schools and colleges across the region. This is significantly improving performance against Gatsby benchmarks (which indicate schools and Colleges' commitment to CEIAG). We have this year begun work to analyse destination data post-16 to examine trends to further inform our work. Looking to the future, the roll out of the Future Skills Questionnaire by the Careers Hub should provide an opportunity to monitor the impact of CEIAG on young people at a more granular level. This all helps us to target our support and learn from what works.


More broadly, the roll-out of the Mayor's Good Employer Charter is providing a cohort of employers who are engaged with education and training. This provides an important opportunity to engage employers with careers outreach activity and support with shaping new provision.


There have also been several wider partner initiatives delivered which support future skills needs including Green Futures Fund, Workforce for the Future, the Future Technology Centre, collaborative co-design and delivery of bootcamps, the WoE Institute of Technology, to name a few.



Outcomes and action framework			
 2. Enable all young people to achieve their potential			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More young people achieve positive and sustained destinations • More young people facing the greatest barriers and challenges achieving a positive and sustained destination • More young people participating in apprenticeships and technical education opportunities and pathways • More young people progressing to education or training at level 4 or higher (such as degrees, higher apprenticeships and higher national diplomas) 	<p>Ensuring all young people receive high quality Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)</p>	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide schools and colleges with the training, resources and knowledge needed to deliver quality CEIAG (e.g. through Careers Hub). • Provide tools to audit and evaluate school and college CEIAG programmes to drive improved quality and student outcomes as well as inform future resourcing and strategy. • Connect employers, providers and education to deliver meaningful outreach activity in schools and colleges (e.g. Enterprise Adviser Network) • Provide Schools and Colleges with high quality Labour Market Information on jobs and apprenticeships to inform their CEIAG programmes. • Aim to source additional funding to target students who need additional or tailored CEIAG to achieve their potential. • Work in partnership with providers and schools/colleges to promote technical education and apprenticeship pathways alongside higher education options. • Connect Schools and Colleges together in communities of practice including through Peer and Expert led reviews. 	<p>Councils can support employer engagement activity and align with their own post-16 and reduction of NEET & education strategies and delivery.</p> <p>FE/HE Providers can work collaboratively to deliver outreach activity to promote the range of pathways available.</p> <p>Councils – alignment and collaboration with education and skills strategies and projects to achieve shared objectives.</p>

Outcomes and action framework			
 2. Enable all young people to achieve their potential			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More young people securing decent jobs in our region (especially those facing the greatest barriers and challenges) • More young people taking up learning opportunities aligned with regional skills needs 	As above.	Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek resources to deliver Careers Hub style support for independent training providers • Explore opportunities to work with younger age students through primary school CEIAG provision. • Aim to secure more sustainable funding to scale and continue initial pilots where impact has been achieved. • Use evaluation tools (Future Skills Questionnaire) to better target resource and support • Develop specialist skills and knowledge within the workforce to support young people most at risk • Ensure information on, jobs, training and apprenticeship opportunities is available through Skills Connect. • Identify opportunities to address skills gaps and labour shortages within the careers advisor workforce. 	

Outcomes and action framework			
 2. Enable all young people to achieve their potential			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	Working closely with our Councils to ensure support and alternative learning routes are available for young people at risk of becoming NEET, currently NEET and/or facing additional barriers to progression (including SEND)	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support young people most at risk through transitions (e.g. through maximising opportunities to access additional funding from the CEC and other sources) • Remove barriers for disadvantaged young people in partnership with employers and the community, taking best practice from Community Support Fund and Effective Transitions Fund and ensuring future funding and resource meets young people’s need (e.g. through the Mayoral Priority Skills Fund and other sources) 	Councils can collaborate with reduction of NEET projects, SEND teams, the We Work for Everyone project and employer networks
		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise learning from Reboot West evaluation and the South Gloucestershire Hub Incubation Project to develop approaches to supporting other marginalised groups • Co-design with partners a region wide programme to support young people most at risk of becoming NEET with transition support and employer engagement activity. • Identify funding opportunities to support NEET young people into employment and/or training in collaboration with LA partners. 	

Outcomes and action framework			
 2. Enable all young people to achieve their potential			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	<p>Developing the diverse talent pipeline and talent pools needed to meet skills gaps and future jobs by supporting employers to engage with education, specifically around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences of the workplace and internship opportunities • technical and vocational pathways • engagement with diverse groups of young people through inclusive and accessible opportunities 	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with emerging LSIP and employers to position careers education in the context of the local labour market • Amplify technical and vocational routes (e.g. through the Amplifying Technical Education CEC Funding) • Help employers to connect with education providers (e.g. through Careers Hub and CEIAG providers) • Help employers to deliver high quality outreach work, including through employer standards (e.g. through the Careers Hub) • Help employers to deliver outreach activity to young people who face additional barriers to the workplace (including those with SEND) and are at risk of NEET. <p>Going forward, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a regional apprenticeship service as part of Skills Connect to provide practical support for and drive-up awareness of apprenticeships amongst both learners and employers particularly within under-represented sectors/groups. • Identify further funding opportunities to promote technical and vocational pathways specifically to those who face additional barriers. • Identify further funding opportunities to deliver additional support for employers to engage with young people who are at risk of NEET or face additional barriers to the workplace. • Further develop and scale the Green Futures Fund 	<p>ASK (Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge) – Collaboration with ASK delivery in schools and colleges.</p> <p>LA's collaboration through projects such as Bristol WORKS and economic development teams.</p> <p>LSIP delivery team and wider skills team at Business West</p>

Outcomes and action framework			
 2. Enable all young people to achieve their potential			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	Widening participation in Higher Education	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in collaboration with UniConnect programmes and University WP teams to promote the widening participation agenda. • Support schools to offer opportunities for students to engage with HE provision in line with Gatsby Benchmark 7. 	UniConnect programmes and HE Widening Participation teams are best placed to collaborate.
		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together with HE providers in the area to align access and participation plans and develop collaborative activity, with a particular geographic focus on areas with low HE participation 	
	Improving educational attainment, particularly amongst disadvantaged children and where learning was lost due to the pandemic	Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design activities which challenge and support our schools to improve outcomes and raise aspirations amongst young people' • Work together with the UniConnect programmes to identify 	LA Education Teams, UniConnect Projects, Education providers all could work with us to identify how we can best collaborate.

Outcomes and action framework			
Cross cutting themes			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
<p>More young people understand the digital skills needed for the workplace and inspired to enter digital careers</p> 	<p>Embedding digital skills into the curriculum and school CEIAG programmes.</p>	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect young people with real-life, diverse digital role models to widen participation and aspiration for STEM careers and understand the digital skills needs required by all sectors • Work in partnership with employers to promote digital skills and pathways into digital careers (e.g. through Cornerstone Employer Network) 	
<p>More young people inspired and motivated to enter Green jobs and careers</p> 	<p>Embedding green skills into the curriculum and CEIAG</p>	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Green Futures Funding (using the learning from the pilot) which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying how we can use our funding to align school and college activity to the green skills agenda - Providing LMI to ensure students/parents/carers are aware of opportunities in green jobs & relevant pathways - Engaging people currently working in the green economy to engage with schools e.g Enterprise Adviser Network and strategic cornerstone employers 	

2. Case Studies

The Green Futures scheme has supported students in the region to learn more about opportunities to enter 'green' careers and understand the skills needed for the region to achieve Net Zero. Students have taken part in experiences of the workplace, employer led activities, careers fairs, and teachers have learnt how to link their curriculum to the green skills agenda. By linking our young people to advice and opportunity, we are driving up awareness of green careers across the region.



The Enterprise Adviser Network is a network of over 80 employer volunteers supporting schools to improve their engagement with local businesses. Nick Lee is a Lawyer working with The City Academy School, Nick says – "I spoke at a Year 8 assembly recently to share my journey into law from a single parent background living on a council estate to become the youngest and first non-white Partner in a top 100 law firm. You could hear a pin drop. The teachers said that they had never known the students to listen so intently. I work on the basis that if I can inspire just 10 children to achieve their dreams, they may go on to inspire 10 more each, and so on. Building a brighter future takes a collective approach"



3. Support unemployed and inactive people into work

Why is this important to us?

As of September 2022, there were 47,900 people not working in the region who would like to be in work. Many of these individuals face complex barriers to work which can include low skills, health issues (including mental health), lack of confidence, transport, language, childcare or other caring responsibilities, as well as social issues such as housing, drug and alcohol misuse and other complex needs. Helping people overcome these barriers to work – getting into or progressing in work – will help combat rising costs of living whilst at the same time strengthening our economy by addressing skills shortages.

Since the pandemic, economic inactivity has risen in parts of the region, linked to health problems and early retirement, although we are also seeing that people are considering de-retiring to respond to the cost-of-living crisis. Whilst unemployment is currently low, economic uncertainty and recessionary pressures may cause it to rise again – our plan must therefore be flexible enough to respond to rapidly changing circumstances.

Data also shows that people in some demographic groups and communities face greater barriers to work (e.g. disabled people, people with health conditions, older workers, BAME, migrants and refugees, people living in deprived areas). Many factors influence these

inequalities, but employers have an important role to play in developing more inclusive recruitment practices and workplaces. By working to address these inequalities, we can build fairer communities and a stronger economy.

Employers are seeking increasingly higher skills levels, so our plan focuses on both entry level but also higher levels skills, as well as enabling those in lower paid jobs to progress up to higher levels (see objective 4). Employers all need their staff to have Maths, English and Digital skills and those with higher level qualifications will need to re-train to access jobs in areas where there are skills shortages and opportunities (e.g. green skills, emerging digital roles etc).

Where are we now?

Significant progress has been made in this area by the Combined Authority and its partners. Through the Adult Education Budget, we have been able to support 10,615 unemployed people with the skills they need to find work. We have also launched the Mayor's Good Employment Charter which supports employers to adopt different recruitment practices and diversify their workforce. We have brought increased focus to ESOL for those who need to improve their English skills and have supported people through the Covid pandemic through our Community Support Fund. Skills Bootcamps now in their first year of delivery (FY 22/23) Combined Authority are



another way for us to train unemployed people for specific employer demand.

Our partners have also been very active in this area, with our Unitary Authorities working closely with DWP to deliver local support services and our strong voluntary and community sector is actively involved in addressing social barriers to work. We must also ensure that those delivering support to the unemployed and economically inactive in our region understand our local employment and skills landscape and engage strongly with the Combined Authority to foster closer alignment of support. Nationally contracted services currently include Restart for longer term unemployed, Work & Health Programme, and National Careers Service.

We have opportunity to build on this using UK Shared Prosperity Funds, Multiply and other funding to actively promote engagement and progression.

Outcomes and action framework



3. Support unemployed and inactive people into work


The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More unemployed and inactive people supported into work • More people facing complex barriers supported to re-engage in education and employment pathways • More unemployed/inactive people having career development skills and engaged with lifelong learning • More inclusive and equitable employers 	Providing adults with careers information, advice and guidance	Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase availability of personalised advice and guidance to people who want to work through Skills Connect including support to manage major redundancies • Improve AEB provision of free advice and guidance to all learners by providers and encourage providers to offer wider 'wrap around' support they need to progress into and within employment • Ensure all adult funding applications incorporate CEIAG as an assessed element and followed up as part of the end-of-project evaluation 	National Careers Service should link closely with Skills Connect when providing CEIAG to clients and refer into this service. Ensure learning is shared through project evaluation
	Using holistic approaches to help people overcome complex barriers to work (including confidence)	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support community led, person centred projects which help overcome barriers to work, including specialist provision 	West of England Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector
	Linking unemployed people to real job opportunities	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage our providers to take up our flexibility to deliver provision in the workplace and provide fundable work experience to learners • Help individuals to connect with decent job opportunities (e.g. through Jobs Connect, Skills Bootcamps and Sector Based Work Academies funded by AEB) 	SEETEC and the CA to continue strong liaison to ensure cross referral of support Strengthen local and strategic links with Job Centre Plus Inform the CA of upcoming jobs and careers fairs to promote via Skills Connect

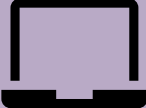
Outcomes and action framework




3. Support unemployed and inactive people into work

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	Equipping people with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to secure employment, retrain and adapt to the changing labour market	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide employability support to unemployed and economically inactive residents (e.g. through our adult education) • Provide short courses and training aligned to the needs of the economy • Promote increased uptake of National Skills Fund Level 3 programme (Free Courses for Jobs) which offers free learning for eligible learners to undertake the courses which equip individuals to secure high-quality jobs. Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver job role specific training via Skills Bootcamps 	Business West to understand and interpret employer skills needs via the LSIP and ensure this voice is reflected in CEIAG provision and Skills Connect
	Improving Maths and English (including ESOL) skills to help people access and sustain work	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to residents to improve their Maths and English skills (e.g. through adult education and Multiply activities) • Providing ESOL support to people that need it (e.g. through adult education) 	
		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a regional ESOL plan to specifically address delivery of ESOL in the region, to identify issues and ensure that delivery fully meets learner need, and industry specific need • Review how ESOL is funded by AEB to ensure that funding enables providers to support all needs 	

Outcomes and action framework			
 3. Support unemployed and inactive people into work			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	Supporting employers to develop inclusive and equitable working practices to provide opportunities for all	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Mayor's Good Employment Charter • Provide SMEs with in-depth support to analyse and develop the skills of their employees and develop plans to upskill and retain staff 	
		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Disability Confident Employer Scheme • Monitor employers' commitment through annual quality review visits 	

Outcomes and action framework			
Cross cutting themes			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
More unemployed/ inactive people gaining the digital skills they need for life and work 	Equipping people with digital skills for work	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide residents with digital skills for life and work (e.g. through Adult Education and the Digital Skills Investment Programme and other funding e.g. Mayoral Priority Skills Fund) 	
		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify access to digital skills provision across the region and help people and businesses understand which courses are most suitable through the Skills Connect online directory and personalised support • Provide personalised wraparound support to help target groups under-represented in digital roles and/or disproportionately affected by lockdown measures to access training and support progression to further digital training or digital roles • Help residents in financial difficulty to access services, equipment and data (e.g. West of England Databank) • Use innovative ways to recognise new digital skills and confidence gained through the above interventions – building on the Community Support Fund pilot e.g. Digital Badging • Provide funding for employers to upskill employees to bespoke organisational need through Skills Bootcamps 	

Outcomes and action framework			
Cross cutting themes			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
More unemployed/ inactive people inspired and motivated to enter 'green' jobs and careers More unemployed/ inactive people gaining front line green skills 	Equipping people to enter frontline green jobs	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver bespoke flexible green training programme linked to the need of employers (currently through Skills Bootcamps) 	
		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify access to green skills/low carbon training provision across the region and help people and businesses understand which courses are most suitable through the Skills Connect online directory and personalised support 	

3. Case Study

'The Mayoral Combined Authority's Skills Bootcamps uniquely position employers at the centre of skills training. Designed to fill short to medium term skills gaps, Skills Bootcamps target specific employer needs with targeted training interventions. This helps employers remain competitive in a challenging market.

Since 2022, we have secured over £8m of Skills Bootcamp funding for the region, benefitting employers in sectors spanning digital, green, construction, logistics and care. Many new techniques have been taught, for instance in Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), Artificial Intelligence and Cloud technologies, whilst HGV and bus driver training has helped overcome immediate skills shortages impacting locally. Over the coming year alone, we will train over 2300 residents.'

A Skills Bootcamp learner recently undertook the Welding Bootcamp at Bath College and said – "I really enjoyed the welding course – [they] made the subject easy to learn. They were supportive and able to deliver and communicate well with us as students with zero experience in welding, I must admit the bootcamp went above and beyond my expectations – both personally and professionally.



During our course, the Head of Dept managed to arrange meetings and interviews with companies, factories, and workshops owners looking for welders or people with welding knowledge and I interviewed and found a job before I finished my course. What a great opportunity for anyone looking to start a new career."

4. Support people to progress in work

Why is this important to us?

In March 2021, there were between 102,600 and 153,900 jobs paying less than the Real Living Wage. As the Real Living Wage is based on the income that people need to live, this means that many working people in our area are experiencing in-work poverty. This in turn has implications for child poverty which limits the ability of our young people to achieve their potential. Furthermore, as we prepare this plan in 2023, high levels of inflation and the cost-of-living crisis mean that even more working people are likely to be drawn into poverty.

As one of the country's most successful, growing economies with a relatively high employment level, there are significant opportunities for progression within the labour market, but many people do not know how to access these opportunities or have the skills and confidence to do so. This is particularly true for emerging opportunities, such as green jobs, where pathways are only now emerging.

Skills and training are vitally important to helping people to progress. People with lower skills are more likely to be in poorly paid jobs and studies show that in the future, demand for unskilled work is likely to fall. Similarly, people without Maths, English and Digital skills are at a disadvantage in the workforce. However, many factors such as mental health,

low confidence, learning difficulties and other factors such as caring responsibilities often prevent people from engaging with in-work progression activities.

Labour market inequalities also mean that some groups are more likely to be in low paid/insecure employment (e.g. women, disabled people, BAME people). By working to address these inequalities, we can build fairer communities and a stronger economy and minimise the gap between our low and high earners.


Ensuring that residents have access to the training they need to secure good jobs in the region is crucial to enhancing the quality of life of residents and underpins the success of businesses across the West of England. Employers have an important role to play in addressing these challenges, but national trends indicate that employers are less likely to train their staff than previously. This trend may be further affected by economic uncertainty.


Where are we now?


Much progress has been made since the first plan was published. Devolution of the Adult Education Budget means that the Combined Authority can now prioritise residents in low paid work or jobs that are at risk of redundancy. Alongside this, Future Bright is


now an established service which has provided one to one career coaching and support to over 3,500 employed residents since 2018 creating increased income for these participants of over £3.6m with further wellbeing benefits estimated at a social value of nearly £4.8m.



In addition, a raft of new initiatives have enabled us to support increasing numbers of adults to improve their specialist skills, numeracy and digital abilities (Skills Bootcamps, Multiply, Digital Skills Investment Programme) to meet the needs of employers across all sectors. Alongside support to individuals, our business support programme (Workforce for the Future) has supported hundreds of SMEs to help them understand how to find or build the skills they need to thrive and grow. The introduction of the Metro Mayor's Good Employer Charter recognises the important role played by employers and aims to set the standard for working practices in the region and support businesses to invest in their staff and enable more inclusive, equitable and sustainable working practices.

Outcomes and action framework			
 4. Support people to progress in work			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people working in decent jobsⁱⁱ which offer good rates of pay, flexibility and opportunities for progression • More people taking up training opportunities aligned with regional skills needs • More people achieving technical and professional skills • More employers developing inclusive, accessible and equitable working practices • More people 25 years and over taking up apprenticeship opportunities 	<p>Addressing personal and structural barriers to progression (such as confidence, soft skills and mental health, networking)</p>	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide free career coaching, training and support to help individuals to develop the skills and confidence they need to take their next career step and improve their earning potential and career longevity (e.g through Future Bright, AEB and Multiply, DSIP progressions) • Provide grass roots interventions to improve progression through voluntary and community groups 	<p>Skills Connect (LA spoke services)</p> <p>National Careers Service (4 week in-work support) signposting onto other support services at the end of the 4 weeks</p> <p>Working people on income related benefit in the DWP Light Touch support group will be given additional support to progress and improve prospects and finances</p>
		<p>Going forward, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widen our eligibility for Future Bright to enable more people to access the service and ensure better cross referrals and support by our partners • Promote a range of support services available via Skills Connect 	

Outcomes and action framework			
 4. Support people to progress in work			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
See above	Equipping people with the knowledge, skills and experience they need to progress in work Helping people to retrain in response to redundancies/job losses and wider economic opportunities	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 'Foundation Skills for Work' (e.g. through Adult Education) • Provide 'Intermediate Skills for Work' (e.g. through Adult Education) • Listen and respond to providers and FE Colleges to ensure funding methodology is adequately flexible to deliver timely interventions where it is most needed <p>Going forward, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and simplify our searchable online directory of employment and skills provision, alongside building access to locally tailored and personalised advice and guidance to help people identify the support they need to progress in employment (through Skills Connect) • Work closely with employers and providers including FE colleges to identify new skills funding opportunities • Facilitate partnership opportunities between employers and providers to remedy skills gaps 	Skills Connect (LA spoke services). Working people on income related benefit in the DWP Light Touch support group will be given additional support to progress and improve prospects and finances
	Improving Maths and English (including ESOL) to help people progress in work	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to residents to improve their Maths and English skills (e.g. through Adult Education and activities funded by Multiply) • Provide ESOL support to people that need it (e.g. through Adult Education) <p>Going forward, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide high rates of funding to providers to reach those furthest away through the Multiply initiative 	Skills Connect (LA spoke services) National Careers Service (4 week in-work support) signposting onto other support services at the end of the 4 weeks

Outcomes and action framework			
 4. Support people to progress in work			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
See above	Supporting employers to develop inclusive, accessible and equitable working practices with training and opportunities for progression	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a full triage service through the West of England Growth Hub where accredited business support advisors provide businesses with access to information, advice and guidance enabling fair and sustainable business growth. Promote the Mayor's Good Employment Charter which supports with wider recruitment and diversity practice, and supports employers to understand the benefits of diversity in the workplace • Build support into our programmes to help employers navigate the skills ecosystem and understand better how to use recruitment and training to widen and strengthen their workforce planning. • Provide SMEs with in-depth support to analyse and develop the skills of their employees and develop plans to upskill and retain staff and bring in new talent (e.g. through Workforce for the Future) 	
		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Disability Confident Employer Scheme 	

Outcomes and action framework			
 4. Support people to progress in work			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
See above	Increasing take-up of apprenticeships at all levels for in work progression	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide SMEs with support to understand the apprenticeship system and apprenticeship development plans (e.g. through targeted projects delivered through the Growth Hub, such as Workforce for the Future, and initiative available through other providers in the region (banks, networks, trade associations, R&D institutions, etc. Sharing good practice through mechanisms such as business advisory boards, sector development groups and the Combined Authority convened Business Insights Panel • Promote the successful Share to Support scheme which utilises unspent apprenticeship levy to support training within SMES <p>Going forward, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a regional apprenticeship service as part of Skills Connect to maximise apprenticeship opportunities in the region providing practical support and drive-up awareness of apprenticeships amongst both learners and employers • Continue to build on Share to Support to retain levy funds in the region for the benefit of our SMEs and future apprentices 	South West Apprenticeship Ambassador network can support to connect with employers

Outcomes and action framework			
Cross cutting themes			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
<p>More people inspired and motivated to enter digital jobs and careers</p> <p>More people gaining the digital skills they need for life and work</p> 	<p>Helping people to re-train to take advantage of digital progression opportunities</p>	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide residents with digital skills for life and work (e.g. through AEB, CSF, Skills Bootcamps and Digital Skills Investment Programme) <p>Going forward, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify access to digital skills provision across the region and help people and businesses understand which courses are most suitable through the Skills Connect online directory and personalised support • Provide personalised wraparound support to help target groups under-represented in digital roles and/or disproportionately affected by lockdown measures access training and support progression to further digital training or digital roles • Celebrate every achievement through digital badging to recognise new digital skills and confidence gained through the above interventions – building on the Community Support Fund pilot 	<p>Skills Connect (LA spoke services).</p> <p>National Careers Service (4 week in-work support) signposting onto other support services at the end of the 4 weeks</p>
<p>More people inspired and motivated to enter 'green' jobs and careers</p> <p>More people gaining the 'front line' green skills needed to support the region's low carbon transition</p> 	<p>Helping people to re-train to take advantage of 'front line' green skills opportunities and support the low carbon transition</p>	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver bespoke flexible green training linked to the need of employers (currently through Skills Bootcamps) and promote delivery of linked entry level green skills via AEB <p>Going forward, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote green skills training opportunities via Skills Connect • Work with employers and training providers to co-design training solutions to meet immediate frontline green skills needed in the region e.g. energy systems, renewable energy installations, heat pumps, retrofit and hydrogen) • Continue to incorporate green skills into a range of skills programmes and projects • Consider ring fencing AEB funding in future years to ensure focus on green skills by all providers and across all sectors 	

4. Case Studies



Taiwo was studying and working part-time as a Customer Service Advisor before joining Future Bright. She aspired to work in a management position after finishing

her studies and was able to achieve her goal with support from her personal career coach, Rebecca. She said

“Future Bright is a really good opportunity and if you commit, the results will show over time. The goals that you set; you can achieve. Personally, Future Bright was a blessing to me. I have had a promotion and I even have a salary increase coming”.



Lucy went freelance after being made redundant from her job in interior design during Covid pandemic. She said, “I felt lost and found navigating the freelancer world very

daunting. I wanted to become more business minded and to develop my business, generate more income and to create a bigger, more focused clientele. I wanted to understand what is required to grow as a freelancer and what tools I’d need to make that happen.” So Lucy got in touch with Future Bright, the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority’s in-work progression programme. She was assigned a career progression coach who helped her focus on developing as a freelancer. Since joining Future Bright, Lucy has gone to webinars relevant to her business, expanded her networks and changed her thought process and working methods.

When asked how Lucy found working with her career progression coach Gareth, she said “really positively, I felt like I could ask him anything and he went out of his way to help me. Very reassuring and had a lot of insight. I think just having your goals and plans discussed and written down made me more motivated and gave me this new purpose that drove me forward. Just having general conversations with my coach about any worries or advice was incredibly beneficial for me”.

Summarising her support from the service, Lucy said, “I feel way more confident in what I’m doing and how I’m doing it. The new skills I’ve gained put me in a better position going forward!”

5. Address employer needs and skills gaps

Why is this important to us?

Some employers are struggling to recruit people to fill vacancies, and this is preventing them from growing. This issue spans many parts of the economy and includes sectors vital to the wider functioning of the economy and our society such as transport, health and social care, as well as our important knowledge-based clusters.

We want our employers to thrive across the region and, as highlighted in the LSIP pilot evaluation report, access to a highly skilled workforce is an important factor in improving productivity and growth. However, national trends suggest that employers are not engaging in workforce development and training as much as they did previously and there is a concern that this may worsen due to the cost-of-living crisis. Numbers of people taking up apprenticeships are also falling, which is concerning as apprenticeships provide a key vocational route for many learners and employers.

A key part of the recruitment challenge is the lack of diversity in certain job sectors, with various groups under-represented including women, men in some sectors, ethnic minorities and disabled people. Not only does this perpetuate inequalities, but businesses are not able to draw on the diverse talent they need

to grow. Companies with executive teams in the top quartile for gender diversity are 25% more likely to outperform their competitors and this rises to 36% for ethnic diversity.ⁱⁱⁱ We also aspire to helping widen socio-economic diversity in the workplace.

Throughout this plan we have referenced engaging local talent and taking a place based approach – by ensuring all our residents have access to clear pathways and training to be able to access these opportunities we can address inequalities, tackle skills shortages, and improve productivity as well as to promote recruitment in areas with pools of talent. This is a particularly pressing issue where employers are reporting extreme difficulty in finding sufficient numbers of (suitably skilled) staff.

We know that our economy is changing, and skills needs are changing rapidly. For instance, to meet net zero targets by 2030, an estimated 23,000 new jobs will be created. Similarly, the UK Industrial Strategy Council predicts that, unless action is taken, in 2030 the most widespread under-skilling will be in basic digital skills.^{iv} Equipping our residents with the skills needed for tomorrow will future proof our economy.

In common with the rest of the country, our region has some sectors of high volume employment where there are staff, as well as

skills, shortages, such as health and social care, retail and hospitality, construction, logistics and distribution which we must address. However, we also have specialist sectors which provide routes to growth and inward investment for our region, and where there are a range of existing and emerging skills needs, including aerospace and advanced engineering, financial, professional and business service, creative and cultural industries, digital technologies (quantum, AI... etc), and life sciences.

Where are we now?

Together we have made enormous progress in this area since the first plan was developed. Our partners, with the support of the Combined Authority, have progressed several initiatives to improve the supply of technical, digital and engineering skills in particular, including projects such as the West of England Institute of Technology, Institute of Coding, iStart and DETI. The region also benefits from four universities as well as FE colleges supplying graduate level skills into the region.

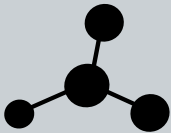
To support the work of partners, the Combined Authority has developed several initiatives to support the development of workforce skills. These include:

- Workforce for the Future – which provides free tailored, in-depth support to help ensure employers have access to the skills, training and support they need to thrive;
- Share to Support – which transfers unused apprenticeship levy from larger to smaller employers. To date over £2m has been retained in the region and 200 apprentices recruited;
- The Mayor's Good Employment Charter – which works with businesses to understand the importance of workforce development to support business growth;
- Thrive at work – which supports business leaders with the mental health and wellbeing of their workforce;
- Leadership and Management development – access to peer learning, fully funded training courses and business mentoring to improve leadership and management of businesses; and
- Business Advisory Boards – access to non-executive director style support from a group of experienced business leaders.

We have also successfully drawn down funding in 2022-23 for regional Skills Bootcamps which directly meet employer skills gaps and learned best practice in how to build genuinely employer led programmes. We will continue to draw down these funds into 2023-24. We will continue to use this and any source of funding to meet our employers' skills needs and ensure business productivity.

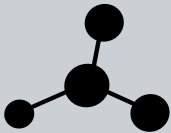
In addition, as part of the West of England Growth Hub triage service, businesses undergo a full review of opportunities to both address challenges, to plan for growth, and to increase productivity. Developing talent, in-work progression, and skills development is a major part of the Growth hub offer.

Outcomes and action framework

 **5. Address employer needs and skills shortages**

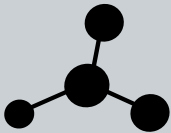
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More employers having the skills and talent they need to thrive • More employers training their staff, supporting retention and creating opportunities for progression • More employers engaging in the codesign and co-delivery of education and training provision 	<p>Helping businesses to understand their current and future skills needs and find the support they need</p>	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide businesses with support to understand their skills needs, promote the benefits of workforce development and navigate our region's skills system (e.g. through Workforce for the Future and our Growth Hub) • Provide employers with support to engage with future diverse talent through schools and colleges (e.g. through the Careers Hub) • Work with the region's inward investment service – Invest Bristol and Bath – to ensure businesses moving to the area access local people and skills 	<p>Though regional business support and inward investment services (Growth Hub and Invest Bristol and Bath)</p>
	<p>Ensuring that skills provision aligns with employer need, now and in the future, including through major new regeneration and inward investment</p>	<p>Going forward, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a searchable online directory of employment and skills provision with personalised advice and guidance to help people and businesses identify the support they need through Skills Connect <p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand future skills gaps and developing with partners long term plans to align provision including for major regional developments and inward investment like Bristol Temple Quarter, including new Enterprise Campus <p>Going forward, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of the Local skills Improvement Plan and ensure recommendations are acted on by providers • Share relevant labour market information with schools and colleges and support them to ensure curriculum delivery aligns to current and future demand from employers (e.g. through Careers Hub) 	

Outcomes and action framework

 **5. Address employer needs and skills shortages**

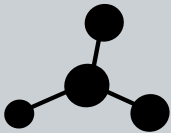
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Promoting greater workforce diversity and inclusion to benefit productivity and address skills shortages	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support businesses to proactively employ and nurture diverse talent more actively, confidently and successfully Build outreach activity in schools to attract a more diverse future talent and widen young people’s view of potential careers Promote the Good Employer Charter Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support existing work with employers and specialist training providers to offer employment and training opportunities to people with disabilities/SEND and other under-represented groups Promote via Skills Connect, accessible pathways in the system which reflect the needs of diverse learners 	Bristol WORKS is actively supporting employers to create opportunities for work experience for young people WE Work for Everyone led by BCC is delivered across the region to promote opportunity to those with disability/SEND
	Supporting the growth of apprenticeships and other technical pathways to fill technical skills gaps	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the Share to Support scheme to transfer levy to SMEs Connect employers and Apprenticeship and Technical education training providers with schools to promote their opportunities and access future talent. 	Strengthen and build relationships with our 4 universities regarding skills and higher level provision to meet emerging employer demand and build whole pathways of provision

Outcomes and action framework

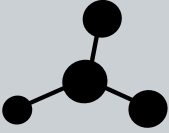
 **5. Address employer needs and skills shortages**



The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a regional apprenticeship service as part of skills Connect to provide practical support for and drive-up awareness of apprenticeships/traineeships amongst both learners and employers (including degree level) • Work with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to ensure that apprenticeship standards reflect labour market need and local conditions • Feed into and influence national policy discussions on apprenticeships and technical education routes • Seek to extend and expand the Share to Support scheme, based on huge success to date 	
	Supporting employers to develop high quality working practices	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Mayor's Good Employment Charter • Promote the CEC Employer Standards and provide training to improve the quality of employer outreach in education • Promote the Share to Support scheme to transfer levy to SMEs Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the DWP Disability Confidence Charter 	

Outcomes and action framework

 **5. Address employer needs and skills shortages**

The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	Encouraging entrepreneurship and self-employment	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide coaching to those who are self-employed and meet Future Bright eligibility • Signpost those wanting to start a business to the Growth Hub Universal Business Support service delivered in partnership with the West of England local councils • Provide access to a range of entrepreneur and business start-up support available in the region through the Growth Hub accessible either through one-to-one triage with an Enterprise Executive or through the Growth Hub web portal. 	
		Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with our regional universities, provide a new entrepreneurial support programme 'Start' designed to develop individuals from having a tech-based business idea to running their own start-up company. Including 28 hours intensive training, workshops, and mentoring; the chance to earn a free place in a university incubation programmes; and access to shared networks and investment opportunities. 	
	Developing leadership and management skills	We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote information and access to leadership and management coaching and mentoring support through Skills Connect • Provide leadership and management skills through peer-to-peer learning, one to one mentoring and access to training and development courses via the Growth Hub 	

Outcomes and action framework			
 5. Address employer needs and skills shortages			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	As above.	Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work closely with employers and sector representatives through the SAP and other channels to identify areas of need and address management skills 	

Outcomes and action framework			
Cross cutting themes			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
<p>More businesses with the skills needed for digital transformation</p> 	<p>Ensuring our region's businesses have the skills and capabilities needed for digital transformation</p>	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver bespoke flexible digital training programmes linked to the needs of employers (e.g. through Bootcamps) • Support manufacturing businesses to grow with digital technologies (e.g. through Made Smarter) • Engage relevant employers with Schools and Colleges to promote digital skills needed in the workforce and engage diverse future talent. Work with schools and colleges to align their curriculum to the skills needed for digital transformation. 	<p>Computing Hub, STEM Ambassador Network – both could help with curriculum alignment in education.</p>
<p>More people working in front line green jobs (e.g. retrofit roles)</p> 	<p>Ensuring our region's businesses have the skills and capabilities needed to deliver the low carbon transition</p>	<p>We will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase business' engagement and understanding of the climate and ecological emergency, including the skills required to meet net-zero ambitions (e.g. through the Growth Hub and Low Carbon Business Support events, resources and surveys)¹ • Deliver bespoke flexible green training programmes linked to the needs of employers (e.g. through Skills Bootcamps) • Stimulate demand for Green skills in supply chains (e.g. through Regional Low Carbon Delivery programmes) • Connect relevant employers with schools and colleges to engage with diverse future talent through the Green Futures Fund 	

Outcomes and action framework			
Cross cutting themes			
The long-term outcomes we want to achieve	What we (collectively) need to focus on to achieve the longer-term outcomes	What the Combined Authority will do	How our partners could help
As above.	As above.	Going forward, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put a focus on front line green skills such as retrofit skills to meet immediate and emerging need • Launch the West of England 'Retrofit Accelerator' initiative as part of the CESAP. Supporting the retrofit of over 350 small and micro businesses • Through CESAP develop a peer-to-peer support programme to promote innovation and environmental transition. • Ensure Green skills needs are regularly reviewed and responded to, reflecting fast-moving markets, innovations and local/national priorities. 	

5. Case Study

Kitco are a family-run business, supplying workwear, sportswear and other promotional products onto which a business or club's identity can be branded. In a competitive industry they pride themselves on their traditional and personal service.

The team were finding themselves consistently busy and felt it time to expand their team. Dave Hallett, company director of Kitco, got in touch with us to find out more about the West of England Apprenticeship Service, a part of the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's 'Workforce for the Future' programme. Dave told us, "due to one member of our small team planning retirement, we needed to start thinking towards the future and filling a gap in our print room. Also with increasing business demand we wanted to expand our team and were interested in learning more about apprenticeships".








The West of England Apprenticeship Service (WEAS) researched apprenticeship standards after listening to Kitco's business needs and areas for growth. Once a standard had been chosen by the company, WEAS organised for Kitco to meet with a training provider to discuss the provision and how it could be tailored to the needs of the business. Fast forward a few months and Toby is approaching his third month working as a print operative at








Kitco, while studying 1 day a week to achieve his Level 2 Print Operative apprenticeship! For the company, more 'hands on deck' have increased sales but also enabled them to engage with a future workforce.








For most small businesses funding is always one of the first hurdles when thinking about recruiting an apprentice. However for Kitco, as well as accessing support from WEAS, the team also benefited from our Share to Support scheme by accessing a large employer's unspent apprenticeship levy, kindly gifted to the scheme, which covers the full training costs of Toby's apprenticeship.

SUMMARY OF COMBINED AUTHORITY STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The tables below summarise the Combined Authority's current and next strategic initiatives

Our Current Strategic Initiatives	 01	 02	 03	 04	 05	 Digital	 Green
Careers Hub – Providing schools/colleges with the training, tools, resources and knowledge to deliver CEaIG, supporting careers leaders, supporting young people most at risk, working in partnership with employers. Amplifying technical and vocational routes	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Green Futures Fund – supporting schools and colleges to deliver the green skills agenda	✓	✓					✓
Community Support Fund – transition this fund to build on best practice gained in supporting community led, person centred projects to help people overcome barriers to work and improve progression and support legacy work			✓	✓			
Devolved funding of Adult Education Budget – setting the direction of AEB funds so that they are used to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community learning to promote outreach and progression to learning and work • Skills to meet current and emerging skills needs for priority residents • Maths, English, ESOL and digital skills • Careers coaching • Foundation & intermediate skills for work 			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Workforce for the Future – providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMEs with in-depth support to analyse and develop the skills of their employees • Short courses and training aligned to the needs of the economy • Share to Support which utilises unspent apprenticeship levy to support training within SMEs • Supporting businesses to proactively employ disabled people more actively, confidently and successfully 			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Our Current Strategic Initiatives	 01	 02	 03	 04	 05	 Digital	 Green
Skills Bootcamps – providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short courses and training aligned to the needs of the economy • Bespoke, flexible green training programmes • Bespoke, flexible digital training programmes • Bespoke, flexible construction training programmes 			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multiply – Supporting residents with low numeracy skills and who experience barriers to addressing these skills			✓	✓			
Good Employment Charter – Promoting the West of England Good Employer Charter which sets the standard for working practices in the region and supports businesses of an size or sector to improve investment in their staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Digital Skills Investment Programme – A £2m programme to support access to digital skills training, increasing access to and take-up of adult education opportunities and bespoke training courses to fill digital skills gaps			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Future Bright – Providing free career coaching, training and support to help individuals to develop the skills and confidence they need to take their next career step and improve their earning potential				✓	✓		

Our next strategic initiatives	 01	 02	 03	 04	 05	 Digital	 Green
Skills Connect – Implement ‘skills connect’ to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A searchable online directory of employment and skills provision for people, businesses and providers • Personalised advice and guidance to people furthest from the labour market and assist them with access to the wider ‘wrap around’ support they need to progress into and within employment • Support for individuals and businesses to understand which digital courses are for them • Support for individuals and businesses to understand which green courses are for them • A regional apprenticeship service to provide practical support for and drive-up awareness of apprenticeships amongst both learners and employers • Labour market intelligence to allow the Combined Authority and partners full visibility of existing provision as they develop new services 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mayoral Priority Skills Fund – Provide quick, flexible response to skills needs where there is demand from employers and gaps in provision	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skills Bootcamps – Deliver job specific training via Skills Bootcamps Wave 4			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Future Bright – develop a business case to secure funding beyond its current end date of Feb 2024				✓	✓	✓	✓
Green/Future Skills Co-design – seek funding to support training providers to work with employers to co-design training solutions to meet immediate front line green skills needed in the region e.g., energy systems, renewable energy installations, heat pumps, retrofit and hydrogen along with other future skills needs				✓	✓	✓	✓
Promote the Disability Confident charter		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Transition Support – Co-design with partners a region wide programme to support young people most at risk of becoming NEET with transition support		✓					
Apprenticeship service – map and develop as part of Skills Connect a platform to promote apprenticeship awareness, knowledge and take up and to monitor success over time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

HOW THE PLAN WILL BE MONITORED AND MANAGED

We recognise that targeting support (in terms of individual, occupations, sectors etc.) over the life of the plan is difficult, in a rapidly changing economy.

We need to be agile and responsive to challenges as they emerge as well as addressing long-standing issues. We therefore plan to develop an annual targeted delivery plan, which will form part of the Combined Authority’s annual business plan, which will outline what we will focus on in the coming year, drive investment and enable us to channel available skills funds in a targeted way in each year. The annual delivery plan will be informed by:

- direction from the Mayor and Councils and align with the Combined Authority business plan;
- labour market information and research;
- feedback from Skills Connect delivery;
- evidence and input from key delivery partners (including LSIP); and
- evaluation and success of initiatives delivered over the year.
- This will enable us to keep our delivery agile and responsive to emerging need and changing economic conditions.

We are committed to monitoring our progress and measuring success. This will be done at multiple levels and will use the following tools:






Tool	What	Reviewed and updated
Annual delivery plan	An agile plan aligned to the CA business plan setting out clear objectives and delivery tailored to address current need	Annually
Labour market information dashboard	A publicly available dashboard giving up to date information on the labour market, jobs and skills, enabling us to constantly review delivery and tailor it to local or regional need	Quarterly
Monitoring dashboard	An internal tool for use by the Combined Authority and its Local Authority partners to review delivery and progress over the year including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities undertaken • outputs achieved against target • outcomes on track and achieved 	Monthly






ANNEX A: MEASURES OF SUCCESS






The table below sets a basket of indicators which will help us evaluate progress against the longer-term outcomes set out in this plan. These will complement our existing project and programme management methodologies employed to monitor and report on the success of our funding. During the lifetime of the Plan we will place a specific emphasis on measuring the impact of our green skills work.

The indicators chosen meet the following criteria:

- Are publicly available and easily accessible;
- Are updated at least annually;
- Are from a reputable source (e.g. ONS, DfE etc.);
- Allow us to measure the impact and success of this plan over time

Indicator	Latest Figure	Baseline	Change since baseline	National Figure	Source of data	 01	 02	 03	 04	 05
Number of unique users of Skills Connect website	X	X	n/a	n/a	Skills Connect	✓				
Average number of Gatsby benchmarks achieved in schools and colleges	5.56 (21/22)	2.46 (2019)	Up 3.1	4.9 (21/22)	Careers and Enterprise Company WoE Careers Hub	✓	✓			
% of students achieving sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination at '16-18	79.3% (20/21)	82.1% (17/18)	Down 2.8%	79.1% (20/21)	DfE Education Statistics Destination of students leaving 16-18 study	✓	✓			

Indicator	Latest Figure	Baseline	Change since baseline	National Figure	Source of data	 01	 02	 03	 04	 05
% of disadvantaged students sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination at '16-18	69.1% (20/21)	72.2% (17/18)	Down 3.1%	70.2% (20/21)	DfE Education Statistics Destination of students leaving 16-18 study	✓	✓			
% of students at KS 5 progressing to any HE institution	26.8% (20/21)	24.5% (17/18)	Up 2.3%	35.7% (20/21)	DfE Education Statistics Destination of students leaving 16-18 study	✓	✓			
Apprenticeship starts aged 16-24	3,790 (21/22) 52.8% of starts	4,660 (17/18) 60.4% of starts	Down 19%	52.6% of starts	DfE Education Statistics	✓	✓			
% of NEETs/activity not known aged 16-17	6% (2022)	6.6% 2017	Down 0.6%	4.7% 2022	DfE Education Statistics	✓	✓			
% of residents aged 16-64 who are unemployed	2.6% (Jan 22- Dec 22)	4% (Jan-Dec19)	Down 1.4%	3.6% (Jan 22- Dec 22)	Annual Population Survey	✓		✓		
% of residents aged 16-64 who are inactive	18.1% (Jan 22- Dec 22)	18.1% (Jan-Dec19)	n/a	21.5% (Jan 22- Dec 22)	Annual Population Survey	✓		✓		
% of inactive residents (aged 16-64) who want to work	22.5% (Jan 22- Dec 22)	28.5% (Jan-Dec19)	Down 5.5%	18.1% Jan 22- Dec 22)	Annual Population Survey	✓		✓		
% of residents (aged 16-64) with level 2 or above skills	83.0% (Jan-Dec 21)	80.7% (Jan-Dec 19)	Up 2.3%	78.1% (Jan-Dec 21)	Annual Population Survey	✓		✓	✓	
% of residents (aged 16-64) with level 3 or above skills	69.2% (Jan-Dec 21)	66.2% (Jan-Dec19)	Up 3%	61.4% (Jan-Dec 21)	Annual Population Survey	✓		✓	✓	
% of residents (aged 16-64) with level 4 or above skills	50.5% (Jan-Dec 21)	45.4% (Jan-Dec19)	Up 5.1%	43.2% (Jan-Dec 21)	Annual Population Survey	✓			✓	✓

Indicator	Latest Figure	Baseline	Change since baseline	National Figure	Source of data	 01	 02	 03	 04	 05
% of people earning less than the Real Living Wage (as defined by the Living Wage Foundation)	15% (2021)	19% (2018)	Down 4%	17.1%	Living Wage Foundation/Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings	✓			✓	
No. of apprenticeship starts	7180 (2021/22)	7720 (17/18)	Down 540		DfE, Education Statistics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
% of people aged 16-64 who received job related training in the last 13 weeks	24.8% (Jan-Dec 21)	25.1%	Down 0.3%	18.6%	Annual Population Survey	✓				✓
No of businesses signed up to the Good Employer Charter	115 Active Supporters, representing 7,845 employees (March 2023)	N/A	N/A	N/A		✓				✓
No of employers that have signed up to DWP Disability Confident Charter	321 (March 2023)	N/A	N/A	N/A		✓				✓

Endnotes

- i Horizon Scanning: Post-16 Education and Skills Infrastructure
- ii The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines decent work as “productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”. In general, work is considered as decent when: it pays a fair income, it guarantees a secure form of employment and safe working conditions.
- iii Building the Future Economy. Plan for action for UK business innovation. Innovate UK
- iv <https://futuredotnow.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Hidden-middle-report.pdf>