

ANNEXE B

In line with DfE LSIP guidance (October 2022) the Chamber, as designated ERB, developed a robust and comprehensive evidence gathering and engagement framework for the project. This was underpinned by using a range of research methods to maximise levels of engagement across the local business community within the North of Tyne.

Preliminary work

On designation as the ERB we undertook early consultation with a number of stakeholders including:

- North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) – Officers and wider stakeholders through NTCA's Inclusive Economy Board
- North East Local Enterprise Partnership – Officers and stakeholders through NELEP's Skills Advisory Panel
- Further education providers
- Employer representative bodies including CBI and FSB
- Employers themselves via the Chamber's pre-existing networks, such as our Employment and Skills Forum

This early engagement helped shape our approach in line with the three identified stages of LSIP activity.

Stage A: Articulating Employers Skills Needs

Prioritising sectors

To determine which sectors would be considered as part of the North of Tyne LSIP we used a number of data sources including job vacancy data (EMSI Burning Glass), demographic and educational data (ONS Mid Year Estimates) and ESFA data. We also reviewed and considered relevant strategic plans produced by NTCA including Opportunity for All: North of Tyne Strategic Skills Plan 2021-23 and Working Together: Our Corporate Plan 2022-23 alongside the North East Strategic Economic Plan: Creating more and better jobs from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership. We consulted a number of stakeholders on the pipeline of significant new investments expected to come into the economy over the next three years, their expected geographical location, number of jobs and likely skill requirements.

Following initial consultations an approach was developed which would look at immediate skills requirements, medium term requirements (one to two years) and longer term requirements (three years). The criteria for assessing specific sectors was:

- What are the sectors with the highest level of vacancies? (immediate need)
- What are the growing sectors expected to have a significant skills requirements over the next 3 years? (longer term)
- What significant investments are expected over the next three years which will have a significant direct skills requirement AND are likely to impact on other businesses working in the sector or supply chain?
- What skills are common to most businesses where there are significant shortages (regardless of sector)? (cross cutting themes)

Having determined this approach, we then undertook further consultation with stakeholders on the proposed priority sectors. To avoid duplication we also identified a number of sectors where a significant amount of work had already been done on determining overall skills requirements. We therefore focussed the LSIP on sectors where skills requirements and employer demand had been explored in less depth. Following further consultation and engagement at NTCA's Inclusive Economy Board and NELEP's Skills Advisory Panel and with officer teams at both organisations, we were able to select the relevant sectors and cross cutting themes.

The Chamber is also the ERB for the North of Tyne Strategic Development Fund (SDF) 2 project and the selection of Green Energy and Net Zero as a sector ensured close alignment with the SDF as well as fulfilling the relevant requirement of the LSIP guidance.

Methodologies and approaches

To engage with the largest number of employers possible a range of methods were used:

- 121 in-depth interviews
- Surveys - sector specific and cross cutting
- Events - sector specific and cross cutting
- Roundtable discussions
- Engagement via other ERBs – Event attendance, consultation with skills groups, circulating surveys, consideration of existing research
- Telephone interviews

In line with the LSIP guidance it was important that we developed an approach that engaged widely beyond existing Chamber membership to ensure as representative selection of employer views as possible. In particular this needed to include methods to reach and consult with SMEs and employers who struggle most to get their voices heard by providers. We addressed this by working closely with other ERBs including Northern Offshore Federation, FSB, CBI, Northumberland Tourism, Berwick Chamber of Trade and the Tyne and Wear Cultural Collective.

We also tailored our methods to the sector being researched. For example, when approaching businesses in two of our priority sectors, Health and Social Care and Culture, Creative, Hospitality and Tourism, we recognised that potential respondents would be unlikely to be able to leave their premises to attend events, and therefore prioritised the use of digital and telephone research methods.

As an example, we obtained 488 responses to a general survey of the wider business community. Companies for this exercise were identified using the Fame database. North of Tyne specific findings are presented below:

North of Tyne: Responses by area

- 38.0% Newcastle
- 38.4% Northumberland
- 22.6% North Tyneside
- 0.4% North East wide (multiple sites/offices including North of Tyne premises)

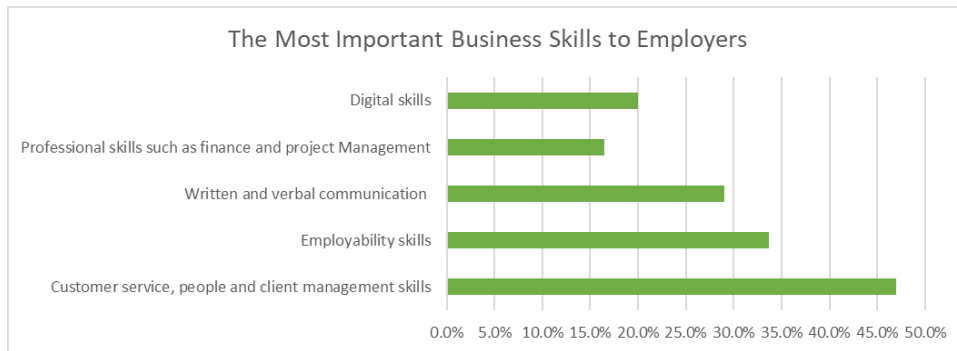
Are you experiencing any sector specific skills shortages?

59.9% of respondents said 'yes'. Of these:

- 11.8% were experiencing shortages relating to digital skills.
- 9.0% were experiencing professional skill shortages (Project Management, Finance, Legal, Accounting).

What business skills do you consider most important for your employees to have?

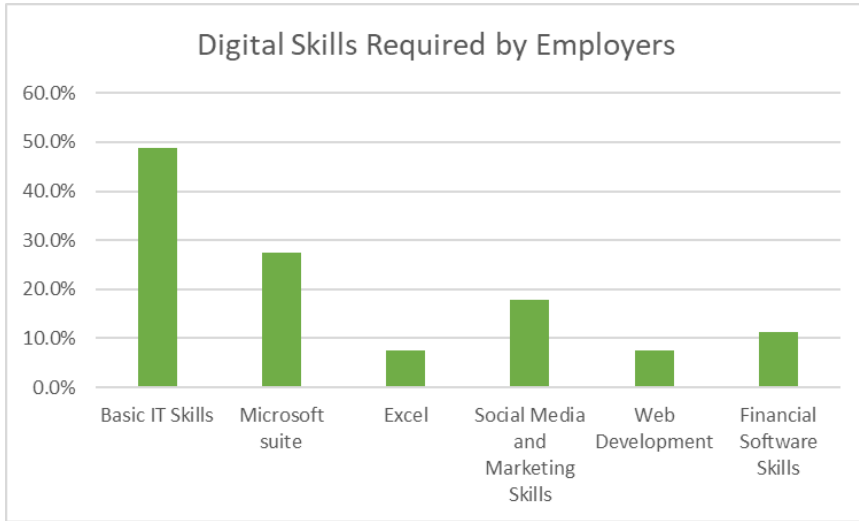
- 47.0% identified customer service, people and client management skills as most important.
- 33.7% identified employability skills such as organisation, time management, attitude to work.
- 29.0% identified general written and verbal communications skills.
- 20.0% identified digital skills.
- 16.5% identified professional skills such as finance and project management.



Thinking specifically about digital skills what skills does your business require?

- 48.8% responded with a minimum of basic IT skills.
- 27.5% responded with Microsoft suite, with an additional 7.5% making specific reference to Excel.
- 17.9% responded with social media and marketing skills.

Results exclude respondents who said they had no requirements.



Engagement measures

Throughout the duration of the project we categorised our levels of engagement into the following three tiers of intensity:

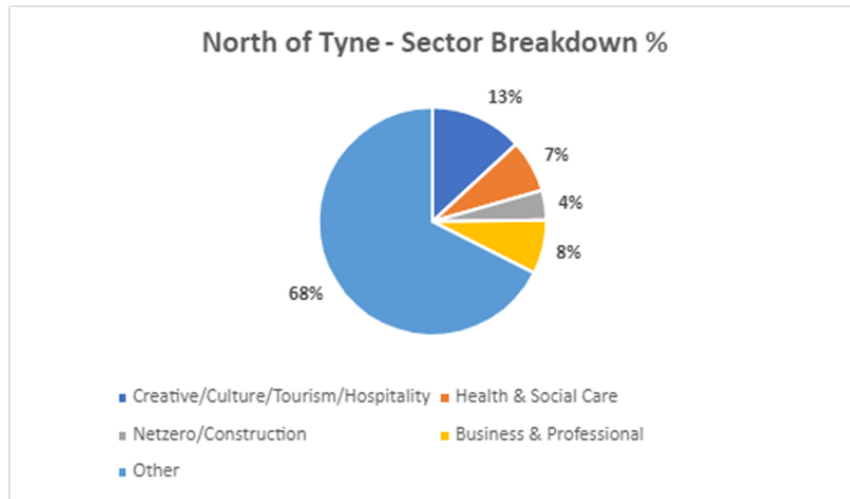
- **Tier 1** – In depth and intensive engagement through 121 (face-to-face and virtual), roundtable discussion, telephone interview
- **Tier 2** – Significant engagement through attendance at shorter events, completed a survey, provided written feedback
- **Tier 3** – Brief engagement through brief recorded discussion at events, light touch feedback, engaged through use of rapid digital consultation tools like Slido at non-LSIP specific events

Throughout the project LSIP staff have attended and/or presented at general networking and industry events often organised through other ERBs. We have also utilised marketing, publications and social media to raise wider awareness of the LSIP process.

The engagement figures set out below are based on positive business engagement at tiers 1, 2, and 3 of the framework.

North of Tyne	Overall Contacts
Tier 1 or 2	1477
Tier 3	290
Total	1767

Overall Tier 1 or 2 engagement by sector	North of Tyne
Creative/Culture/Tourism/Hospitality	194
Health & Social Care	110
Net Zero/Construction	63
Business & Professional	113
Other	997
Total	1477



Stage B: Translating Employer Skill Needs

We have engaged with the FE colleges in the North of Tyne Area and those colleges which have an interest in and/or students who travel to learn from the North of Tyne area.

- Newcastle College
- Northumberland College
- Tyne Coast College
- Gateshead College
- New College Durham

We have also engaged with private training providers through the North East Learning Providers (NELP) network and NTCA throughout the LSIP drafting process and have continued this in identifying the “priorities for change”. Contact has included direct discussion of the priorities following compilation of the first draft of the LSIP and continued through May. The Chamber is also closely collaborating with the consortium submitting an EOI for the Local Skills Improvement Fund.

Stage C: Addressing Learner Demand and Employer Engagement

We have begun the process of developing the necessary learner demand via the following activities and relationships.

Supporting Net Zero Targets - Green Energy and Net Zero Skills/Industrial Decarbonisation

Green skills are central to the North of Tyne LSIP as one of the key sector focuses is on Green Energy/Industrial Decarbonisation and Net Zero. This is based on a number of significant investments in the North of Tyne Area in green technology and Net Zero being a priority for NTCA and NELEP. The SDF 2 project in the North of Tyne is also based around green technology and the LSIP therefore closely aligns with it.

Green apprenticeships and upskilling to meet the significant demands retrofitting will place on the skills system have also been considered as part of the focus on the new technologies in the construction sector.

MCA and Wider Engagement

NTCA has been engaged throughout the process from designation to completion. The LSIP team worked with named officers including the skills leads to ensure co-ordination and alignment with NTCA priorities. The MCA was consulted on the sectoral focus of the LSIP and there have been regular liaison meetings between the teams. There was also close collaboration on the data and evidence base for the LSIP.

The NTCA data team has been instrumental in providing a significant amount of data underpinning this LSIP.

Throughout the LSIP process we have continued to attend and updated NTCA’s Inclusive Economy Board (which includes DWP) and the North East Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Advisory Panel (which includes representatives from CEIAG services and encompasses the North of Tyne MCA geography).