

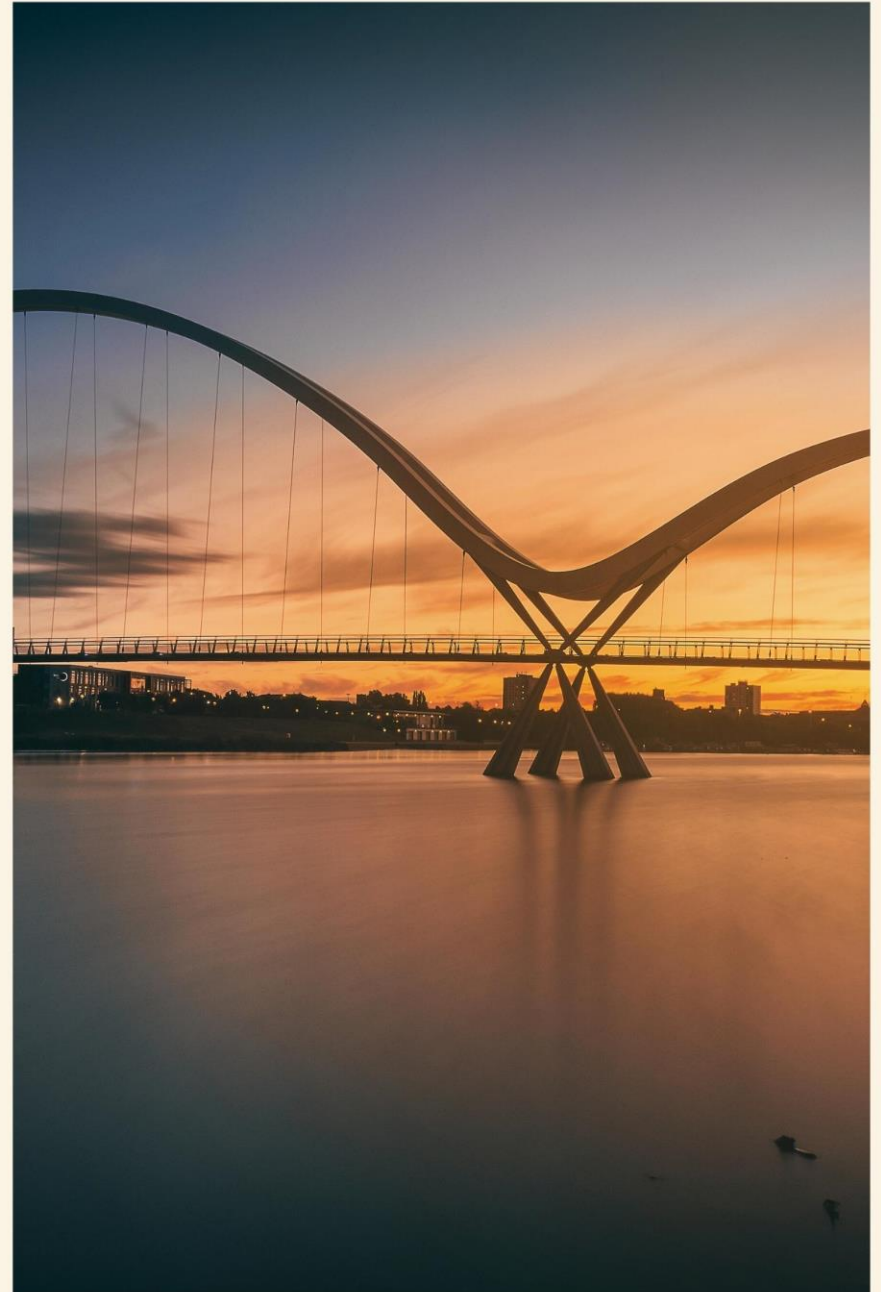
est. 1815

LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Tees Valley
May 2023



Funded by



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

CONTENTS

PART 1: LSIP PRIORITIES.....	3
1.1 THE CHALLENGES OUR LSIP WILL ADDRESS.....	3
1.2 WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE	3
1.3 SECTOR IDENTIFICATION.....	4
1.4 HOW THE LSIP WILL DRIVE CHANGE.....	5
PART 2: TAKING THE LSIP PRIORITIES FORWARD.....	6
2.1 GREEN ENERGY AND NET ZERO - CONSTRUCTION	6
2.2 GREEN ENERGY AND NET ZERO - OPERATIONAL.....	10
2.3 HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	13
2.4 BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES.....	17
2.5 CROSS-CUTTING SKILLS.....	19
2.5.1 DIGITAL.....	19
2.5.2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS SKILLS.....	22
PART 3: DELIVERING THE LSIP PRIORITIES.....	25
3.1 DELIVERING CHANGE	25
3.2 ROADMAP.....	27
3.3 MONITORING AND REVIEW.....	30

PART 1: LSIP PRIORITIES

The Tees Valley Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) places employers at the heart of our local skills system by articulating the skills requirements of a large cross section of employers. This document has been compiled following engagement with 1,470 businesses across the Tees Valley, both in specific sectors and across the wider business base. This represents 8.26% of the companies in the Tees Valley.

1.1 THE CHALLENGES OUR LSIP WILL ADDRESS

The Tees Valley has a strong industrial base with several well-established sectors. However, the Tees Valley economy faces a number of challenges, including low business density, a skilled but ageing workforce, skills shortages in new and growing sectors, and attainment levels that are below national averages as well as further education funding constraints. The area also has a highly mobile workforce and frequently loses skilled workers to other regions or overseas, often due to contract work or higher pay rates.

The Tees Valley is on the cusp of significant industrial change, being at the forefront of industrial decarbonisation and the growth in new, greener technologies. The anticipated level of development will result in a significant increase in demand for skilled workers over the next three years. It is vital that the area builds on the solid foundations of its existing skills and training to ensure there is a ready and highly skilled workforce timed to align with job availability.

Other sectors in the area, including Construction and Health and Social care, have large numbers of existing vacancies and significant predicted future growth. These are also sectors which find it difficult to attract sufficient people into the workforce and the skills system has a role to play in creating clear career paths for people into these sectors.

A huge amount of good work on skills in the Tees Valley has already been delivered by Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), providers and employers. The area also has a significant opportunity to drive real change through the devolution agenda, particularly with flexibility and control over the Adult Education Budget. In taking forward the actions and priorities articulated by employers and set out in this document, we must work in collaboration with providers and stakeholders to build on what has already been achieved.

We aim to ensure that the Tees Valley has a better skilled workforce with skills that are matched to employer needs and the rapidly evolving economy. The creation of this strong skills base is a key part of the overall strategic economic plan for Tees Valley and is essential to attracting inward investment, developing key sectors, increasing job numbers, and increasing GDP.

1.2 WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

Industrial change presents a challenge for skills delivery in the Tees Valley in ensuring that sufficient people are equipped with the correct skills at the time jobs become available. Key factors that will enable us to respond to this challenge include:

- **Basic and softer skills** are often as important to employers as technical sector-based skills. This includes skills such as communication and confidence, which are highly valued by employers and central to the development of the current and potential workforce.
- Skills provision should recognise and respond to the requirements of employers for **specialist skills** that build on base qualifications. The stated preference of employers is for short courses that can be delivered flexibly.
- Generic and sector-specific **digital skills** should be a priority and form part of core skills provision. Whilst many individuals have basic skills such as the use of mobile phones and the internet, there is a significant lack of business and sector based digital skills.
- The **partnership between industry and the post-16 education sector** must be strengthened and become more collaborative. Employers have a role to play in providing on-site experience, practical insights into the application of skills, and genuine partnership to address the shortage of tutors.
- **Employers must commit to supporting the provision** put in place as part of the LSIP. Measures such as flexible apprenticeships will not be successful if initial employer enthusiasm is not maintained.

1.3 SECTOR IDENTIFICATION

The key criteria used for identifying the sector focus for this LSIP are as follows:

- Sectors that will experience significant growth over the next three years;
- Sectors with an immediate skills shortage;
- Sectors where significant investment in the economy is likely to cause skills displacement.

Based on these criteria, this LSIP focuses on the following sectors.

Green Energy/Industrial Decarbonisation and Net Zero: A new and developing sector in the Tees Valley, which includes hydrogen, offshore wind, and carbon capture and storage projects based primarily around large regeneration sites on the banks of the River Tees. It is estimated that over the next five years significant investment will create approximately 10,000 jobs. The LSIP assessment of skills requirements for this sector is in two phases:

- i) Construction Phase - constructing facilities and specialist infrastructure.
- ii) Operational Phase – requiring skills in operations, maintenance, and new technologies.

Health and Social Care: This sector presents an immediate skills challenge, with significant existing vacancy rates and high levels of demand. Whilst demand levels are predicted to remain stable over the next ten years, there is an acute labour shortage with approximately 7,800 vacancies in the sector in 2022 (source: Lightcast).

Business and Professional Services: This sector is crucial to the future development of the Tees Valley, with professional services and public sector specialisms underpinning the regeneration, investment, and development of other sectors. Recruitment and retention can be challenging and it is estimated the sector will grow by 5,500 jobs over the next 10 years. There is also the potential for Tees Valley business and professional firms to be impacted by skills displacement with the development of the Darlington Economic Campus bringing 750 civil servants and several new professional services firms to the region by 2025.

Cross Cutting Themes: In addition to the three sectors outlined above, the LSIP also covers essential cross cutting themes, which were identified through analysis of current vacancies, as well as building on the work in the Tees Valley LSIP Trailblazer 2022.

- i) **Digital Skills (in the non-digital sector)** – Digital skills are a requirement in all sectors of the economy. Whilst the digital sector itself is set to grow by approximately 2,000 jobs over the next 10 years, there is an additional, significant shortage of digital skills in the wider economy.
- ii) **Professional Development/Business Skills** – Identified as a priority through the work on the Trailblazer and analysis of vacancy data. Businesses highlighted skills such as project management where there is a need for development training.

1.4 HOW THE LSIP WILL DRIVE CHANGE

The LSIP can drive change through genuine employer engagement with the skills system. The Tees Valley LSIP is a statutory document designed as a roadmap for change and drawn up in collaboration with employers, stakeholders, and providers within the region. Employers have given their feedback and signalled a real willingness to work collaboratively to deliver the skills and opportunities the region needs to move forward.

Key changes

During our consultation with employers, feedback indicated that the overall standard of technical and vocational courses is good. They praised local provision and reported that courses such as Health and Social Care, Construction Trades, and Engineering teach the right technical skills to an appropriate level of competency.

In terms of improvements to provision, employers stated that they would like access to more advanced technical specialisms that build on base provision, emphasising that such provision should be available in shorter courses with flexible delivery to fit around work. Based on our consultations we have identified the following priorities for improvement to the local skills system that our LSIP will focus on.

- Development of **additional short courses** in specialist technical skills to supplement current Level 2 and 3 qualifications.
- **Improve practical work-related skills** by expanding the provision of work placement opportunities and industry standard mock work environments.
- Ensure that **tutors have the most up to date knowledge and skills** required by developing work-experience and mentoring schemes in partnership with employers.
- **Flexible and innovative approach to course/apprenticeship provision** using multiple employers and specialist skills in an on-site environment.
- Embed as standard the **provision of digital skills** at multiple levels and with sector specialisms, to both upskill and reskill the workforce.
- Renewed, strong emphasis on developing general, business focused, and sector specific **communication skills**.
- Develop local provision for **high demand specialist training** that is currently only available out of area.
- **Enhance CEIAG** in consultation with local employers to ensure that careers advice reflects employer skills needs and job opportunities in the local area.

As the Employer Representative Body leading the LSIP, the Chamber will work with local stakeholders, providers and employers to bring together practical partnerships to deliver the changes required. Some measures will be changes to existing provision and some will use or signpost to existing programmes. The LSIP, which will require both initial buy-in and long-term, sustained commitment to deliver success. The Chamber will work to deliver the required long-term partnerships.

PART 2: TAKING THE LSIP PRIORITIES FORWARD

This section sets out the specific skills and training requirements articulated by employers in each of the priority sectors that form the basis of our LSIP. For each required skill we have identified what provision currently exists to meet these needs, where new provision is required, and the priority changes needed to better meet employer needs.

2.1 GREEN ENERGY AND NET ZERO - CONSTRUCTION

The construction sector within the Tees Valley is set to face unprecedented demand for both general and specialist construction skills, driven primarily by a number of large industrial decarbonisation and green energy projects.

a) General Construction Trade Skills

Key issues and challenges

A consistent finding across the Construction sector was a lack of individuals with traditional trade skills and significant issues with recruitment and retention. Specific shortages include:

- Traditional trades with core skills such as joiners, plumbers, groundworkers, labourers, bricklayers, and steel workers;
- Electrical, mechanical, and civil engineers;
- Welders;
- Professional roles such as project managers, site managers, quantity surveyors and HR.

There is also a lack of uptake in apprenticeships, which employers acknowledge they contribute towards. While many would like to employ apprentices, they are reluctant to commit to lengthy apprenticeships due to the often contract based, short-term nature of projects.

Current provision

There are currently extensive courses and apprenticeships offered in the Tees Valley which cover the skillsets and roles identified above, However, while employers feel that this provision is good quality and teaches the correct skills to provide a solid foundation in construction trades, there are insufficient people enrolling on the courses and too few employers taking on apprentices.

The current gap in provision is related to the flexibility of apprenticeships and mechanisms to allow employers to pool resources. The Government is trialling flexi-job apprenticeships in areas such as Bricklaying, Civil Engineer Technician, Construction Design and Build Technician, amongst other. However, the current system requires a flexi-job agency to employ the apprentice (charging employers a significant amount to engage the apprentices) or the apprentice must source the employment themselves. EN:Able Futures are currently the only agency offering flexi-job apprenticeships in the region.

Priority changes needed

- **Flexible apprenticeships:** Employers are already engaging with flexible style apprenticeships when working outside the region and would like to see the model replicated in Tees Valley. They favour a more flexible apprenticeship model that would allow them to take on apprentices for shorter periods of time, suitable to project length, with the apprenticeship completed by moving between different employers. This approach is considered by employers as being key to addressing apprenticeship and skills shortages.
- **Flexibility of apprenticeship levy:** It was highlighted that the apprenticeship levy is too rigid. Employers would like greater flexibility to share their levy with subcontractors or clients and be able to use it for all types of training.
- **Promotion of sector:** Positive promotion of the sector is needed to address the negative stereotypes associated with construction careers. Key messages employers would like to communicate include the opportunities for progression into higher roles, the positive aspects of site work, and the opportunities the sector offers to those of all educational backgrounds to thrive.

b) Trade Specialisms

Key issues and challenges

There are currently large gaps in higher level engineering and welding skills in a sector that is facing significant future demand. Specifically, there are shortages of high-intensity and pipe welders, and high and low voltage engineers with experience of working on hydrogen and carbon capture projects. Employers face challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled individuals as they are highly mobile and sensitive to wage inflation. The specific skills and competencies required by employers include:

- High intensity, pipe, coded welders.
- Mechanical and electrical engineers.

Current provision

Welding and engineering provision in the region is primarily attached to apprenticeships, which take 11 to 20 months to complete. There is a lack of higher level, specialist welding and engineering courses within the Tees Valley.

There are some mock work environments with industry-experienced trainers available in the local area, for example Seymour's Skills Academy, however there is a need for significant expansion of this type of provision. Employers' cited Hinckley C's Welding Centre of Excellence as a model they would like to see replicated in the Tees Valley, as it provides a combination of higher level skills, site experience and flexibility around contract-based work.

Priority changes needed

- **Add-on Courses:** While Tees Valley has an excellent base skillset and provision for engineering and welding, there is a need for more people to be trained in this base skillset, as well as for additional training in specialised areas such as high intensity and pipe welding and high and low voltage engineering.

- **Mock work settings:** Practical experience in a construction style environment would allow the opportunity to learn and apply higher level technical skills, for example the required continuous practice of higher level welding skills.
- **Industry-experienced tutors:** Tutors with up-to-date industry-experience are needed to provide good quality training in high level technical skills.

c) Non-technical Skills

Key issues and challenges

An issue raised consistently by employers is the lack the employability and soft skills amongst new employees needed to be an effective in construction environments. The specific skills and competencies required by employers include adaptability, collaboration, communication, self-management and being value-driven.

Current provision

Most local colleges and training providers offer employability and soft skills training, either integrated into courses or as separate add-on qualifications. Current provision includes:

- Back to Work Complete Training offer: Certificate in Securing Employment Level 1
- Darlington College: NOCN Award in Skills for Employment, Training and Personal Development Level 1 and 2, NOCN Certificate in Skills for Employment, Training and Personal Development Level 1 and 2, NOCN Diploma in Skills for Employment, Training and Personal Development Level 1 and 2.
- Interserve Learning and Employment offer: Personal Development for Employability Level 1.

Priority changes needed

- **Site experience or mentoring:** Individuals need to learn soft skills and how to apply them either in a workplace or from someone with workplace experience who can contextualise key employability skills.

d) Retrofit Skills

Key issues and challenges

Whilst not directly related to new industrial projects, retrofit was highlighted by construction companies as a key priority in the Tees Valley. The opportunities and projects are significant and domestic and industrial construction companies are keen to engage with the agenda. However, there is currently a lack of skilled workforce to meet demand. The current skillsets within the sector are applicable to retrofit projects, for example electricians, joiners, insulation installers and gas engineers. However, there are already recruitment and retention issues with these roles and concern that, with the retrofit agenda and large-scale industrial projects, there will be a lack of skilled workers to meet the region's requirements. There is also a lack of retrofit and upskilling certification courses to upskill individuals who wish to pursue retrofit opportunities.

Current provision

There are currently Skills Bootcamps offering retrofit courses, available for those currently in the construction industry or newcomers to the sector. However, an expansion of this provision is needed. Current provision includes:

- Provincial Seals - Domestic retrofit installation,
- Retrofit assessor ReGeon
- New Durham College - Route to retrofit and Retrofit heat pump installation and maintenance

Priority changes needed

- **Upskilling and accreditation courses:** Individuals with a base skillset who wish to pursue retrofit opportunities can upskill through add-on courses, giving them the ability to serve multiple projects rather than being solely trained to work on retrofit. However, there is a lack of in-person retrofit courses locally for heat pump engineering, hydrogen boiler installation, heat network skills and insulators. Further to this, there is a need for more local, in-person retrofit accreditation courses, such as PAS 2035.

Construction: Summary of issues and priority changes

Key issues and challenges	Change needed	Outcome for employers
Lack of highly skilled welders and engineers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add-on courses in high and low voltage engineering and pipe and high intensity welding. • Training academy to practice skills such as welding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in skilled workforce locally. • Reduced recruitment and retention issues. • More secure project timelines.
'Hands-on' workplace experience is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme or academy to provide practical, 'on-site' construction experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees with established on-site experience • Reduced need to invest in on-the-job training.
Newcomers to the industry lack employability and 'soft' skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme or academy to develop soft skills in a practical, 'on-site' environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less resources spent on supervision of employees • Employees are functional and effective onsite, and aware of behaviours and skills needed.
Retrofit – upskilling of existing trades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local, flexible, in-person add-on course for retrofit upskilling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access locally to upskilling and accreditations to work on retrofit projects.
Lack of uptake in apprenticeships in traditional trades, engineering, and welding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible apprenticeship model allowing work on short-term projects across multiple employers. • Ability to use apprenticeship levy more flexibly across all training and sharing of levy with other companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established pipeline of employees entering the sector with required skillsets for projects. • Reduced recruitment and retention issues. • More secure project timelines.

2.2 GREEN ENERGY AND NET ZERO - OPERATIONAL

This section of the LSIP focuses on the green energy and net zero sector with a particular focus on skills needs within:

- Power - including renewable energy (such as wind, solar and hydropower), grid infrastructure, energy storage and smart systems technology.
- Industrial energy – including hydrogen production and industrial use, carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) and industrial decarbonisation.
- Supply chain – including businesses in other sectors that supply products or services to customers working in these industries.

a) Specialist Skills

Key issues and challenges

In the Tees Valley, low carbon operations and skills are a key priority, particularly engineers who could work on CCUS and hydrogen projects. It can be challenging to source employees with relevant hands-on experience as the operations and methods are new technologies and new to the region.

There is a clear immediate and long-term gap in these higher technical skills in low and high voltage engineering. Employers outlined that there is good base provision in engineering, but greater uptake of these courses is needed. Key competencies required are:

- Highly skilled engineers in high and low voltage engineering.
- Experience applying these specialist skillsets in work environments, with specific preference for hydrogen and CCUS experience.

Current provision

PASS currently offers High Voltage training courses in the Tees Valley. However, this is a private training company with costs associated with training.

Priority changes needed

- **Industry-experienced tutors:** Highlighted as important to ensure trainees have up-to-date knowledge and that training is of quality and contextualised. Currently difficult to attract industry experienced individuals into training positions due to salary differences, however, with the aging population in the green energy sector, employers have suggested they could 'lend' their older employees to pass along their expertise.
- **Mock work environment:** Hands-on experience is very important to employers but can be difficult to source due to the lack of previous decarbonisation projects in the region. Mock work environments would allow trainees to gain this experience.

b) Transition from other sectors

Key issues and challenges

Due to the skills gaps for skilled engineers in the region, employers have had to consider options for both direct recruitment and training. One option endorsed repeatedly by employers is recruitment from the oil and gas sector, where individuals have the hands-on experience, similar skillsets, and potentially the high-level technical skills needed to work on hydrogen and CCUS projects. However, those transitioning from other sectors may not have experience in applying their skills to decarbonisation, hydrogen and CCUS environments.

Current provision

The Energy Skills Alliance is developing training related to the transition between oil and gas and the green energy sector. However, it is unclear when this training will be available.

Priority changes needed

- **Bridging course:** There is a need for short transition training and accreditation to allow high-level engineering skills from other sectors to be applied in hydrogen and CCUS environments. Employers favour an add-on bridging course between sectors, particularly from the oil and gas sector.

c) Knowledge of Net Zero

Key issues and challenges

Employers identified that there is a lack of understanding of net zero, renewables and decarbonisation amongst employees entering the workforce. Specifically, they do not have the required knowledge of industrial decarbonisation, what it is, and how it will impact the region. As the sector grows, training is needed in decarbonisation, net zero and the technologies involved. Whilst many companies are considering decarbonisation strategies, there is a lack of people with the knowledge to advise them or mechanisms to upskill and educate their current workforce.

Current provision

There are currently six green apprenticeships being trialed in the UK, two of which relate to the construction sector (low carbon heating technician and installation and maintenance technician). However, employers do not necessarily need specific specialised apprenticeships in these areas, favouring add-on courses for provision of those skills instead.

Priority changes needed

- **Net Zero Apprenticeship and integration of net zero knowledge into provision:** Training is needed in the concepts of decarbonisation, net zero and renewables, which teaches 'green skills' to those entering the workforce and those currently employed, and allows employees to learn about the current and future technologies which they may need to engage with as part of their roles.

d) Industrial Partnerships

Key issues and challenges

There are several employers developing industrial decarbonisation projects within the Tees Valley. As this is new technology there is currently a lack of knowledge and training regarding the technologies and products used within decarbonisation.

Current provision

There are currently no manufacturer partnerships in technologies or products associated with decarbonisation, for example electrolysers, to ensure knowledge and understanding of technology.

Priority changes needed

- **Industrial partnerships:** Partnerships between education providers and the manufacturers of the products needed within the sector, such as electrolysers, is strongly supported. Collaboration between both parties will enable up-to-date knowledge of the products and technologies to be passed along to trainers, trainees, and employees in the region.

e) Shortage of industry-experienced tutors

Key issues and challenges

Employers emphasised that industry experience and up-to-date workplace practice is vital within provision. It is important to employers that those they recruit understand the industry and gain on site experience, but they believe there is a lack of up-to-date workplace practice within current provision. Employers operating in the sector recognise there is an acute shortage of tutors with up-to-date industry experience and are concerned that, as a result, training is not contextualised due to this lack of experience.

Current provision

There is currently a shortage of industry-experienced tutors providing education in the Tees Valley. The Green Energy and Net Zero sector has grown quickly within the region and people with the appropriate skillsets are difficult to source. It is therefore likely that experienced individuals are continuing to work in the industry rather than move into education. Some provision is available via AIS Survivex, which offers training with industry-experienced trainers.

Priority changes needed

Mentoring and “Lending” Scheme: A mentoring scheme would allow experienced and specialist employees to pass their expertise on to the future workforce, filling the gap in up-to-date practices whilst not facing the disparity in wages between industry and the education sector. “Lending” members of staff to educational institutions, for example for one day per week, would enable them to teach specialist and site related skills. Companies are open to flexible methods of mentoring and tutoring if there is a mechanism in place to put such a scheme together.

Green Energy and Net Zero: Summary of issues and priority changes

Key issues and challenges	Description of change needed	Outcome for employers
Lack of highly skilled engineers in high and low voltage with experience on decarbonisation and hydrogen projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add on training under industry-experienced supervisors to upskill engineers via a programme or academy providing practical experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in people with relevant high level technical skills and practical experience. • Improved quality of provision.
Transition from other sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging course to transition existing skillset to be applicable in CCUS and hydrogen environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger pool of skilled engineers who can apply their skillset in decarbonisation environments.
Lack of knowledge and education in green energy, net zero and decarbonisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the short-term add on courses or content integrated into existing courses. • In the longer-term a Net Zero apprenticeship may be required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees with current knowledge on Net Zero able to advise and work appropriately on projects.
Collaboration with manufacturers in sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A partnership programme between manufacturers and educational providers within the sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable employees with practice working with specific technologies.
Industry experience and up-to-date workplace practice in provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mentoring or 'lending' scheme to allow skilled workers to pass along industry practices and techniques to those in training. • Industry experience could be gained via a programme of excellence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees with experience in the most up-to-date practice and techniques.

2.3 HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The Health and Social care sector in the Tees Valley faces a number of challenges including high immediate vacancy rates. Some of this challenge stems from overall pay and conditions, however the skills system could be used to address a number of issues to make the sector more attractive. Overall, employers feel provision is good in terms of clinical and patient care skills, but felt a number of changes could improve provision.

Key issues and challenges

a) Communication Skills

Employers consistently emphasised the importance of communication skills across all job roles in Health and Social Care, and identified that there is a general lack of verbal and written communication skills in applicants to the sector. The specific skills and competencies required by employers included:

- **Verbal Communication:** Care is primarily a person-focused career that requires candidates to understand the importance of every contact with a patient/resident/client and to have the confidence and verbal skills to engage properly. It is also a key requirement of CQC inspections. In addition, professional verbal communication skills are needed to communicate with relatives, other health care professionals and external agencies.
- **Written skills:** In the care sector written skills form part of the legal requirement to keep accurate and timely records. Employers raised concerns over general standards of written work, including record keeping and written communications such as emails and letters.

Priority Changes Needed

- **Curriculum:** Verbal communication, confidence, and written communication skills should be incorporated into the curriculum as part of professional standards for working in the care sector and have significant emphasis placed upon them.
- **Practical skills:** Whilst NVQs give employers the chance to train staff to their own standard, they feel that QCF qualifications, such as the new T Level Health qualification, have an academic focus in the way they are taught and require more practical learning. For example, there are numerous opportunities for students to engage in activities to develop their communication skills through practical exercises, such as the core component A8.7 which covers a range of verbal and non-verbal communication skills in health.
- **Simulated work settings:** Regular and frequent practical sessions are needed to enable students to develop the communication skills needed in health and social care settings. Practical sessions in a mock ward or other care setting would allow for various elements of communication skills to be rehearsed, from a care plan meeting to establishing food and drink preferences.

b) Digital Skills

Key Issues and Challenges

Both generic and role-specific digital skills were consistently raised as an issue by employers. The specific skills and competencies required include:

- **General IT skills:** Employers require basic competency in Word, Excel and email. In addition, Excel was frequently highlighted as a required competency for functions such as rostering, stock control, visual display of data, cost analysis, and resident records.
- **Specialist digital skills:** There is a range of different patient management systems used across social care settings, as well as standard NHS software and Local Authority case management systems. In addition, much of the equipment now used in a care settings has a digital element. Whilst recognising that different equipment is used across the sector, employers felt more general training on equipment would give individuals the confidence in using devices.

Priority Changes Needed

- **Digital skills training:** Employers would welcome the inclusion of general digital training in the curriculum. For example, it could be incorporated into T Level Health Core component 2.9 (Evidence-based practice) or 2.14 (Public Health approaches). Confidence in the use of digital equipment should also be a priority.

c) Staff Recruitment

Key Issues and Challenges

- **Lack of appropriate candidates:** This is a major issue, with employers raising concerns that candidates often lack an understanding of the demands of the sector, and many do not possess the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected in specific job roles. Drop-out rates are high and is common for employees to enter the sector and leave quickly because the reality of the job does not match expectations. Taster sessions and pre-enrolment short courses could help to give candidates a realistic view of the demands of the role.

Employers also feel that the care sector is too often seen as the sector of “last resort” in terms of careers advice or for those who have had difficulties entering the labour market. This approach serves neither the sector or the individual employee and a more pro-active but selective approach is required from careers advisors and Job Centres when signposting individuals to ensure there is a better understanding of the skillsets required.

- **Lack of appropriate qualifications:** Social care employers feel that social care career pathways are secondary to health routes for providers and do not enjoy parity of esteem. Employers also feel that more could be done to promote higher level career paths and potential career development to potential candidates entering the sector.

Priority Changes Needed

- **Standards and expectations in the workplace:** Provision should include professional behaviour in the workplace, covering everything from attire to answering the phone. Teamwork is also an essential skill raised by employers.
- **Emphasis on social care as a career:** The new Level 3 T Level Health does not have a social care specialism. Until 2025 the legacy qualifications can cover social care. However, beyond this point the only provision will be via apprenticeship routes. Employers would like social care career pathways to be given equal parity with health pathways.
- **Holistic focus on health and social care:** Health and social care provision is based on predictions in future population needs and response to events. How services are created and adapted should be part of the context of health and social care learning, which should also include approaches used, such as relational, strength-based, and trauma-informed approaches.

d) Specialist Public Sector Requirements

Key Issues and Challenges

Local Authorities require specialist training in commissioning services. Other competencies identified include enhanced teamwork, developing a relational approach, and increased awareness on the impact of external events on local provision, such as war and refugees.

Current Provision in Health and Social Care

It is important to acknowledge that courses and provision in Health and Social Care will be subject to significant change for academic years 2023/24/25. Therefore, it makes sense to map provision overall rather than link recommendations to courses which will change within the LSIP timeframe. There are currently 364 courses available for health and social care in the region. Half are Level 2 courses, of which a third are provided by councils. There are 25 active apprenticeship programmes, provided by a mix of private and public sector trainers. All local FE colleges offer full Level 3 Health and Social Care courses for both 16–18-year-olds and adult learners. Under the government T Level programme, the T Level Health course will become a key course for 16-19 year-olds not progressing to an apprenticeship.

Priority changes needed:

Specialist courses: Provision of specialist short course to provide continuing professional development (CPD) training for public sector practitioners.

Health and Social Care: Summary of issues and priority changes

Key issues and challenges	Description of change needed	Outcome for employers
Face-to-face communication	More practical sessions on communication strategies.	More candidates with appropriate skills.
Telephone skills	Holistic simulated work settings covering more of the service user journey.	More “work-ready” staff.
Written skills	Practice formal writing methods in emails, letters, reports.	Greater compliance with CQC standards.
General IT skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate IT skills into courses. Free online courses in Microsoft available.	A more flexible and competent workforce.
Excel IT skills	Use opportunities in topics to practice Excel.	Staff with enhanced IT skills.
Specialist digital skills	Student experience of specialist programs in sector.	More candidates with appropriate experience/ understanding.
Lack of appropriate candidates	Focus on 24/7 needs in the sector. More teamwork, with team membership changing throughout the course.	Candidates with a more realistic view of sector career demands.
Lack of appropriate qualifications	Holistic teaching in QCF courses to include importance of social care and careers.	Greater understanding of the sector and its component roles, better career choices.
Specialist local authority needs		Deeper understanding of regional care requirements and provision.

2.4 BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The Business and Professional Services sector is a strategic priority in the Tees Valley. The area has recently been selected as a cross-governmental hub and the Darlington Economic Campus will host several departments on one site, including the Treasury. This positions Tees Valley as an attractive place for multinational professional service businesses and the sector will see significant growth over the next three years, with the potential for displacement from existing businesses.

Key skills sought by employers included general business skills, as well as profession specific skills in accountancy, financial services, architecture and public services.

Key issues and challenges

a) Business and Professional Behaviours

- **Communication and client management:** Employers identified communication skills as a priority, particularly verbal communication, business focused written communication skills, professionalism, and confidence. As a largely client-facing sector these skills are valued as highly as subject based skills and employers report that standards appear to have fallen in candidates.
- **Problem solving, fact finding and research:** These abilities are lacking among candidates, despite them being integral to many academic subjects. Further provision is needed to ensure the practical application of academic disciplines translates into the workplace.
- **Practical application of knowledge:** Applicants from traditional academic routes need additional training in applying their knowledge in the workplace. Employers would consider technical routes into employment, although some are hesitant to invest in training from entry-level or through apprenticeships, partly through to lack of awareness but also due to concerns about retention post-qualification.

Current provision

There is a notable lack of business and professional training currently available in the Tees Valley. However, employers did report that they would consider applicants without a profession specific qualification and invest in training them on the job.

Priority changes needed

- **Professional communication skills:** Training to support the development of practical work-based skills as an additional element of existing courses.
- **Practical application of knowledge:** Work-based scenarios incorporated into courses could support the transition into employment including problem solving, fact-finding, and research skills.

b) Specific Professions

Within the individual professions, different skills shortages were identified at both entry and senior levels.

- **Accountancy and Finance:**
 - **Digital:** Employers frequently reported that candidates have limited proficiency in Excel and identified it as a key skill.
 - **Business understanding:** Employers feel that current provision does not relate to the Tees Valley economy or have a practical understanding of accountancy as it applies to small businesses.
- **Legal:**
 - **Qualified solicitors, property, and commercial lawyers:** Vacancies across the legal sector. Once qualified, candidates move elsewhere for higher salaries and benefits packages. Local employers are unable to compete and as a result some employers are hesitant to invest in training at a post-16 level.
- **Public Sector:**
 - **Planning, tendering, and commissioning:** There are significant public sector vacancies for these skills and little local provision. Employers in both the public and private sectors raised this as an issue with skills shortages having the potential to delay developments.
 - **Higher level Health and Safety inspection:** Identified as a particular issue on COMA sites.

Current provision

There are few options for accountancy training in Tees Valley and most are delivered remotely or by national providers. Of the local providers, Darlington College, Middlesbrough College and Northern Skills Group offer Accountancy apprenticeships up to Level 4, and Hartlepool College of Further Education and Redcar and Cleveland College up to Level 3. A Level 4 Certificate in Accounting Essentials is offered by Teesside University at Level 4.

For Financial Services there is a Level 2 Financial Assistant courses at Darlington College and Stockton Riverside College. Meanwhile there are no local legal training options shown in the mapping at any level and no direct training courses relating to the public sector needs. Health and safety training is only available locally at a lower level.

Priority changes needed

- **Increased pathways into sector:** Currently reliant on graduates who require additional in-house training, employers are keen to engage with alternative pathways into the sector, as they believe the technical element of training would naturally support the development of required skills. There is opportunity for the sector and training providers to work together to develop and promote a local training offer that would support and retain local talent in the Tees Valley. This offer would include financial training, accountancy and public sector courses.
- **Development Courses:** Enhanced support to help business to be competitive and fill gaps in senior roles. This includes training to support CPD through professional service courses, such as management of professional services.
- **Public Sector:** Suite of provision focused on public services where vacancy levels are high or there is a shortage of higher level skills tailored to the development of the Tees Valley economy. This includes planning for complex industrial sites, health and safety inspection for COMA sites, commissioning, and tendering.

Business and Professional Services: Summary of issues and priority changes

Key issues and challenges	Description of change needed	Outcome for employers
Communication and client management skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include professional communication skills training, such as writing emails, phone manner and presentations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced burden of training new recruits.
Problem solving, fact finding and research skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include professional scenarios into training to support the development of these skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced burden of training new recruits.
Ability to apply knowledge to workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared promotion of alternate pathways into sector that allow long-term training commitments and 'on-the-job' training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical training can support the development of workplace skills.
Senior level shortages and lack of staff development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer pathways into senior roles, with training to support CPD and shorter training options for reskilling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased staff retention and higher level vacancies filled.
Unfamiliarity with T Levels and how to access them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More guidance on how T Levels could be implemented into businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear pathway into sector.
Lack of financial training in the Tees Valley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tees Valley offer up to L7 for Chartered and Fellow Accountants. • Local apprenticeship into the profession should be developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firms could access and train local talent. • Training would include business skills in addition to financial knowledge.
Training not appropriate for working with Tees Valley clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with employers to promote the availability of courses. • Align provision with the needs of a small business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates would require less on-the-job training as their knowledge would be relevant.
Candidates have limited Excel experience and no experience in market leading accounting systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainees should have knowledge of Quickbooks and Zero, including experience of raising invoices for customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could support the transition into employment for employers recruiting from training.
A need for professional training within the public sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical training that provides direct route into professional public sector professions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability for public sector vacancies to be filled.

2.5 CROSS-CUTTING SKILLS

In addition to the three specific sectors included in our LSIP, we have identified cross cutting themes that are essential to the development of a highly skilled workforce across all sectors of our economy, namely digital skills and professional development/business skills. The specific challenges and priorities for these two cross-cutting themes are outlined below.

2.5.1 DIGITAL

As digitisation has become ingrained in our everyday lives, so has the need for digital skills in different sectors. Digital skills cover a broad range of abilities, including anything from turning on a computer and using a till system, to developing and using emerging technologies. There is a two-pronged need for digital skills within the Tees Valley, which includes cross-sectoral digital skills and the digital sector itself. Whilst some employers feel that the digital skills shortage is primarily an upskilling issue, highlighting the digital intuitiveness of the younger generation, the digital divide exists beyond age boundaries.

a) Digital Literacy

Key issues and challenges

Over a quarter of the employers surveyed anticipated changing skills needs in the next 6-18 months (shorter term). A quarter of those with changing skills needs in 18-36 months (longer term), identified digital skills as a key need. A third of these employers want to increase the general digital and IT skills within their business, including:

- **Basic IT skills:** a requirement of over half of businesses surveyed. In conversation with employers this has been further defined as using a computer to communicate, word processing, and navigating the internet.
- **Microsoft suite:** Ability to use the Microsoft suite was consistently cited by employers, with a specific focus on Excel.

Current provision

Redcar and Cleveland College and Hartlepool College offer a mix of Level 1 and 2 certificates for IT users, and include skills desired by employers. There are no specific courses relating to Microsoft or Excel identified in provision mapping.

Priority changes needed

- **Basic digital skills training:** Should be accessible to people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds, placing digital skills alongside maths and English in provision, as they are essential to modern business activity.
- **Excel training:** Excel was cited multiple times as a skillset that requires greater focus across the curriculum, due to its use in multiple roles and sectors. As well as being an essential part of existing provision, options are required for additional, upskilling training.

b) Advanced Digital Skills

Employers also highlighted more advanced digital skills for which they predicted a growing need and were struggling to recruit.

- **Digital marketing:** Marketing and social media were a common theme of discussions with employers, with businesses anticipating that such skills will support their business growth.
- **Software development:** A number of employers require software development skills. However, the long courses associated with development of these skills are a barrier.

Current provision

Digital marketing apprenticeships at Level 3 are offered by both national providers and locally at Redcar and Cleveland College and Baltic Training. Middlesbrough College offers a Digital Marketing Skills Bootcamp.

Software development is offered as an apprenticeship locally by Baltic Training at Level 3/4, Middlesbrough College at Level 4/5, Northern Skills Group at Level 3/4, and Redcar and Cleveland College at Level 3. There are also national options up to Level 6.

Priority changes needed

- **Practical experience built into marketing training:** Whilst provision is available, employers suggested it could be better aligned to their needs. For example, this could include gaining practical experience through running the social media campaigns for training providers.
- **Provision of shorter courses:** This would ensure that training keeps pace with changing trends in marketing. It was further suggested that industry experts could be invited to share their knowledge and promote opportunities within the sector.

c) Digital Sector

Within the Digital sector itself, employers reported that they were satisfied with the technical knowledge of recruits. However, they identified a gap in the more cross-cutting skill of communication, which is a core requirement of many jobs in the sector, such as support roles.

Current provision

The provision mapping identifies 102 digital courses and 67 skills bootcamps delivered locally in the Tees Valley and nationally, including technician and salesperson apprenticeships, and IT support bootcamps. Employers suggest that support elements should be prevalent across all training.

Priority changes needed

- **Emphasis on communication and customer skills:** Digital training courses should cover a range of communication and customer care skills and could include networking as an essential business skill.

Digital: Summary of issues and priority changes

Key issues and challenges	Description of change needed	Outcome for employers
Employers require individuals with at least a basic understanding of IT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital skills to sit alongside maths and English for entry level trainees and returners to the workplace. Local provision offering basic IT upskilling courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce training of new recruits on core skills. Support current workforce to upskill their digital abilities.
Training in the full Microsoft suite (or equivalent), with an emphasis on Excel.	Short courses for upskilling should be made available to businesses.	Improved efficiency in business and current workforce can be upskilled.
Increased need for businesses to employ people with marketing and social media skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short courses in digital marketing so that content remains relevant. Build practical experience into training.	Growth of Tees Valley businesses can be supported through skilled marketers.

Digital training can quickly become irrelevant to the sector, especially in non-traditional routes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication between industry and training providers to ensure that teaching is relevant. Short courses also a favourable option. 	Trainees will be prepared for employment with less training from employer required.
Employees in IT support lacked communication and employment skills.	Include customers service skills, telephone manner and workplace expectations within training provision, to prepare trainees for all aspects of employment.	IT companies can provide a strong customer service offer.

2.5.2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS SKILLS

This covers a range of cross-sectoral skills that are essential to the continuing professional development (CPD) of individuals, allowing them to upskill whilst in work and contribute to the growth of local businesses. Whilst employers are open to exploring local CPD provision, recognising the benefits of staff development and retention, they also identified barriers in their ability to do so.

a) Core Skills

Key issues and challenges

A significant proportion of employers identified a lack of communication and interpersonal skills among staff, with employers in some sectors stating that these skills are as important, if not more so, than technical qualifications. Some employers pointed to the impact of the pandemic and the rise of digital communication as barriers to the development of interpersonal communication. For example, employers in various sectors reported that they struggle to recruit employees with good telephone skills.

Current provision

Employers would expect communication and interpersonal skills to be an essential part of all courses. It is likely that many providers offer these skills within their existing offer, therefore the priority changes are broad recommendations aligned to employer needs.

Priority changes needed

- **Practical communication experience:** Training to provide scenarios to support trainees to communicate professionally.
- **Training/apprenticeship hubs:** Local co-working hubs for trainees/apprenticeships at companies with homeworking, to provide an environment where they can develop skills by communicating and learning from other trainees.

b) Professional Skills

Key issues and challenges

Employers in Tees Valley identified five main professional skills areas that are key to their requirements.

- **Project management and planning:** Highly sought after by employers across a range of different sectors, with vacancy data suggesting there is a significant shortage.
- **Management:** Employers reported a lack of leadership, management, and strategic skills in the Tees Valley.
- **Administration:** Many skilled administrator vacancies were reported by employers.
- **Human Resources and financial skills:** Employers reported difficulties in finding Human Resources employees, which included people with financial skills, such as payroll, tax, and accounts.
- **Tender and bid writing:** Some employers want to grow their business by bidding for public sector contracts but have difficulty in finding people with the skills or training to develop and write successful tenders.

Current provision

For a pure Project Management qualification, the only option currently is at Level 4, delivered by Darlington College. There are a variety of management courses delivered up to Level 5 and Learning Curve Group provide nationally a skills bootcamp on Leadership and Management. Meanwhile, the administration offer in Tees Valley is varied, with a mix of shorter and long courses from Level 2 to 4. There is only one Human Resources training option, which is a Level 5 Apprenticeship at Redcar and Cleveland College. As discussed in the Business and Professional Services section, there is limited financial training in Tees Valley. The provision mapping also shows no tender or bid writing courses in the Tees Valley.

Priority changes needed

- **Upskilling:** Short courses accessible to employers that upskill employees in the range of professional skills identified above.
- **Continuing Professional Development:** Local CPD provision that employers could refer employees to would take the onus off individuals to source training online, and would support the development of professional skills.

c) Employability Skills

Whilst employers who had recruited employees from further education were generally impressed with the subject knowledge of these recruits, they found that they lacked the ability to apply their knowledge to the world of work.

Key issues and challenges

- **Confidence building:** Employers identified the ability to speak publicly, work independently and be resilient in the workplace as key skills gaps amongst recruits.

- **Professional application of skills:** Employers reported that a significant proportion of applicants lack practical workplace skills and the ability to apply their knowledge in the workplace.
- **Job/apprenticeship applications:** Guidance on writing job and apprenticeship applications and interview techniques was highlighted as an important training issue. Employers reported that they receive a high volume of inappropriate and poor-quality applications, which can overwhelm recruitment processes.
- **Careers guidance:** Employers would like careers guidance to promote non-traditional pathways into employment, alongside help with creating partnerships to support these routes into employment.

Current provision

Whilst current guidance indicates that employability is a cross-cutting theme that should be included within training provision, there is no statutory requirement to do so. Specific employability courses in Tees Valley include Level 1 and 2 courses in skills for securing employment, delivered by Darlington College.

Priority changes needed

- **Performing arts techniques:** Employers believe that confidence building should be a mandatory aspect of training provision more broadly and suggested that techniques used within performing arts courses may help to improve the confidence and public speaking skills of employees.
- **Work-place expectations:** Employers identified that developing an understanding of workplace expectations such as timekeeping, standards of behaviour and appropriate communication was an integral aspect of training.
- **Work experience opportunities:** Employers recognise they have a shared responsibility to collaborate with providers to create work experience opportunities and to promote their industries to prospective employees.
- **Inclusive applications:** There is a responsibility for employers to support neurodiverse applicants in their application process and to develop inclusive recruitment methods.
- **Streamlined collaboration:** Collaboration between employers, providers, and Local Authorities is crucial in ensuring that crosscutting skills are an integral part of training provision and that employers can access a range of different training solutions. Employers also suggested that greater collaboration between providers to create a distinct offer of specialisms would help businesses to identify the most appropriate provider for their needs.

Professional Development and Business Skills: Summary of issues and priority changes

Key issues and challenges	Description of change needed	Outcome for employers
Essential skills include communication, interpersonal, problem solving, and team work.	Training to include practical scenarios to develop these skills. Potential for an apprentice hub to enable collaboration	Increased potential for employers to fill vacancy gaps.

Professional service and management skills	Upskilling courses for project management, finance and management skills. Industry specialists to support delivery of courses.	Ability to upskill current staff. Increase in pool of potential recruits who have these skills.
Continuing Professional Development provision.	Local CPD provision for employers to refer staff to.	Increased efficiency of workforce. Improved staff retention resulting from increased development opportunities.
Employability skills including confidence, resilience, interview skills, and application job application skills. Employers unsure whether non-traditional pathways into employment are being promoted.	Confidence building, work experience and employability skills to be mandatory modules within training. Employers to ensure their recruitment processes are inclusive. Collaboration between industry and training providers to enhance careers advice and increase knowledge of pathways into employment.	Reduced burden on recruitment process. Greater diversity of candidates. Retention of local talent in Tees Valley.
Employers reported challenges in using the apprenticeship levy.	A simple and accessible system communicated in clear and understandable language.	Increased ability to maximise use of the apprenticeship levy.
Employers unaware of, or do not fully understand, T Levels.	Awareness raising and direct communication from providers to employers on this topic.	Increased ability to access T Levels.

PART 3: DELIVERING THE LSIP PRIORITIES

3.1 DELIVERING CHANGE

Delivery of the priority changes articulated by employers during the LSIP consultation process requires effective partnership between providers, stakeholders and employers. Successful delivery of the priority actions set out in the roadmap in section 3.2 will create a more relevant and accessible skills offer for employers, whilst also ensuring that individuals are equipped with up-to-date and relevant sector skills alongside broader workplace skills.

The Tees Valley economy is growing, and certain sectors will face unprecedented demand for staff in the coming three years. Effective collaboration between partners to deliver the LSIP priorities will help to build the highly skilled workforce needed to enable Tees Valley and its employers to maximise the opportunities presented by this growth.

This does not require wholesale change to the skills offer and, wherever possible, measures will be taken to enhance existing provision and ensure there is no duplication of existing activities, programmes or funding streams. In addition, the large body of evidence gathered from employers will be used to inform the ongoing development and delivery of the skills offer.

Driving collaboration

Within Tees Valley skill supply has not always aligned with employer demand, largely due to timing rather than lack of provision. Typically, there has been an insufficient supply of suitably qualified individuals at the point at which job vacancies arise. The focus of the LSIP on both current demand and future projects and investments in the next three years will enable a greater alignment between the demand for and supply of skills in the region.

Collaboration between providers and employers is vital to the successful delivery of the plan, alongside greater collaboration between individual providers. For example, in delivering sector specific LSIP recommendations, such as the Centre of Excellence for Welding, the employer representative body (ERB) will seek to bring together employers and providers to jointly plan, design and deliver the project.

In delivering cross cutting themes, the ERB will encourage providers to work together to plan changes and test those changes with employers prior to implementation.

Driving demand

Employers

Employers have a significant role to play in the successful delivery of the LSIP, alongside providers and other stakeholders, and their continued engagement with the process is vital. Their commitment and support is needed in designing and shaping provision, as well as in helping to drive demand from learners through engagement with schools, careers provision and other stakeholders, such as Job Centre Plus.

The Chamber will continue to work with employers, bringing them together with providers and stakeholders to develop the granular detail of the qualifications, skills and outcomes needed, as well as identifying their role in supporting the design and delivery of skills provision, and setting realistic timetables for the delivery of change.

The evidence base suggests there is provision currently available that employers either are not aware of, or do not understand how to access, for example alternative routes into professional services such as adult apprenticeships and T Levels. More can be done to promote existing provision and, in its role as the ERB, the Chamber will encourage collaboration on effective promotion of this provision to increase awareness and avoid unnecessary duplication of activities.

3.2 ROADMAP

Actionable Priorities	Sector (ifATE Grouping)	Responsibility	Specific Actions	When	Potential Barriers
Communication Skills – verbal, confidence, written business skills	Cross cutting (Digital; Sales, Marketing and procurement Legal, Finance and Accounting Business & Administration)	Providers	Review existing qualifications, teaching and pastoral practice to identify where this is already occurring. Activity to be added to existing provision	6-12 mths	Action sits across/above qualification and training provision so different providers may interpret and apply inconsistently
Work based skills – knowledge of behaviours, resilience, teamworking, confidence	Cross cutting (Digital; Sales, Marketing and procurement; Legal, Finance and Accounting Business & Administration)	Providers Employers	Providers and employers work in partnership to identify how this could be added to 19+ offer e.g. extending the Gatsby benchmarks model	12-24 mths	Action sits across/above qualification and training provision so different providers may interpret and apply inconsistently
Digital Literacy/Digital Refresher	Cross Cutting (Digital Sales, Marketing and procurement Legal, Finance and Accounting Business & Administration)	TVCA Providers	Expand current Bootcamp provision, subject to future funding. Focussing on MS Office Suite, particularly Excel	12-24 mths	No additional Bootcamp funding is made available
Sector-specific digital skills	H&S; Green Energy/ Net Zero; Construction; Prof Services;(Construction and the built environment Engineering & Manufacturing Legal, Finance and Accounting)	Providers	Review existing provision and identify how it can be adapted for priority sectors ERB to work with employers to identify sector specific digital skills required	12-24 mths	Providers lack the funding/capacity to adapt and deliver a sector-specific approach
Flexible Apprenticeship Schemes	Green Energy/ Net Zero; Construction (Construction and the built environment Engineering & Manufacturing)	Providers Employers TVCA	Providers to work with employers, TVCA and other stakeholders to develop and implement a pilot scheme to test effectiveness	24-36 mths	Cost pressures affecting employer demand for apprenticeships Lack of incentives for providers to respond to new market
Industry Tutor and Mentor programme	Green Energy/ Net Zero (Construction and the built environment Engineering & Manufacturing)	Employers Providers TVCA	ERB to bring together providers and employers to scope the parameters of a pilot scheme, building on the Gatesby benchmarks model. ERB to work with TVCA on development and implementation of an emerging model.	6-12 mths 12-36 mths	Lack of capacity/appetite from employers to release staff Lack of support from providers to engage available staff effectively

Centre of Excellence for advanced construction skills related to the construction of new Net Zero facilities.	Construction/ Green Energy/ Net Zero (Construction and the built environment Engineering & Manufacturing)	Employers Providers TVCA	ERB to bring together providers and employers to explore model based on existing sector-specific Centres of Excellence. ERB, providers and relevant funders review findings and explore practical next steps e.g. proto-typing, funding requirements	6-12 mths 12—36 mths	No equivalent models of practice exist Funding/support is not available from relevant sources Policy landscape changes within designated timeframe
Provision of training on high and low Voltage electrical engineering	Green Energy/ Net Zero Construction (Construction and the built environment Engineering & Manufacturing)	Providers	ERB to bring together providers and employers to explore detailed requirements for training Subject to proposals providers to develop pilot qualifications/certificates	6-12 mths 12-36 mths	Lack of available teaching staff to deliver new courses Insufficient demand from employers
Provision of advanced specialist welding for construction of hydrogen and other industrial decarbonisation facilities	Green Energy/ Net Zero Construction (Construction and the built environment Engineering & Manufacturing)	Providers	ERB to bring together providers and employers to explore detailed requirements for training Subject to proposals providers to develop pilot qualifications/certificates	6-12 mths 12-36 mths	Lack of available teaching staff to deliver new courses Insufficient demand from employers
Recognition of qualifications and transferable skills from alternative sectors	Green Energy/ Net Zero Construction (Construction and the built environment Engineering & Manufacturing)	Employers Providers	Identify and promote case studies to highlight the priority Explore potential for a longer-term awareness-raising campaign	6-12 mths 12-24 mths	Limited case studies available Limited impact on employer behaviour e.g. diversifying recruitment practices
Work and site experience	Green Energy/ Net Zero Construction Health and Social Care (Construction and the built environment Engineering & Manufacturing Care Services Health and Science)	Employers Providers TVCA	ERB to bring together providers and employers to explore how on-site experience could be better built into existing training and where employers could support this activity ERB to work with TVCA and other relevant specialists to explore existing models e.g, specialist welding academy at the Hinckley C site and work together on any agreed next steps	6-12 mths 12-24 mths	Regulatory, health and safety or safeguarding requirements limit employers' capacity to support an 'on-site' offer Cost, time and complexity affect viability of specialist academy approach
Collaboration with electrolyser manufacturers to develop training	Green Energy/ Net Zero (Construction and the built environment Engineering & Manufacturing)	Employers Providers	ERB to support relevant employers and providers to explore exact requirements, demand profile and timetable to implementation	24-36 mths	Lack of employer demand to justify provider investment
Review of careers advice and provision of short taster courses	Health and Social Care (Care Services Health and Science)	Providers Stakeholders Employers	Review of CIAG by providers and stakeholders Provision to be added/strengthened for existing courses Stakeholders (e.g. Job Centre Plus) to actively promote offer	12-24 mths 24-36 mths	19 years+ CIAG is the responsibility of a variety of providers so proposed changes are difficult to implement consistently

Patient-focused communication skills	Health and Social Care; (Care Services Health and Science)	Providers	Provision to be added/strengthened existing courses	24-36 mths	Pace of implementation of changes does not occur quickly enough to address sector skills' shortages
Sector-specific training	Professional Services – Accountancy (Legal, Finance and Accounting)	Providers Employers	Providers to explore developing new provision, especially shorter pathways for mid-career professionals looking to 'pivot' and change sector	18-36 mths	Lack of sufficient demand to justify upfront investment
Local CPD and development provision for professional services	Professional Services (Business and Administration Legal, Finance and Accounting Sales, Marketing and Procurement)	Providers Employers	ERB to bring together providers and employers to explore requirements Scheme supported by TVCA	6-12 mths	Lack of sufficient demand to justify upfront investment
Financial services provision	Professional Services (Legal, Finance and Accounting)	Providers	Providers explore design and implementation of relevant course provision	18-36 mths	Lack of sufficient demand to justify upfront investment
Greater guidance on use of T Levels for professional services	Professional Services (Business and Administration Legal, Finance and Accounting, Sales, Marketing and Procurement)	Providers TVCA	Further marketing of T Levels, building on national marketing campaign and using relevant channels to market e.g. chartered networks	6-12 mths	Greater awareness still fails to generate improved rates of uptake
Availability of accountancy qualifications to L7 in Tees Valley	Professional Services (Legal, Finance and Accounting)	Providers Stakeholders	ERB to bring together employers, providers and stakeholders such as chartered institutes to explore the introduction of a relevant qualification pathway	6-12 mths	Lack of sufficient demand to justify investment
Promotion of entry level roles in legal services	Professional Services (Legal, Finance and Accounting)	Employers Providers	Awareness raising campaign for careers advice providers and wider stakeholders e.g. Job Centre Plus	18-36 mths	Campaign message may be lost when competing with T Levels promotion etc
Technical training in public sector regulatory services matched to Tees Valley economy	Professional Services/ Public sector (Legal, Finance and Accounting Protective Service Care Services)	Providers	Development of new provision to address identified gaps, with a focus on commissioning and brokerage	24-36 mths	Lack of sufficient demand to justify investment

3.3 MONITORING AND REVIEW

The LSIP runs until March 2025 and will be subject to an annual review and refresh process which will include monitoring and a report to the Secretary of State for Education detailing progress against identified actions.

Key indicators

The key indicators of success will be:

Employer engagement	How have employers been engaged by providers, stakeholders and the ERB to design provision and aid implementation
Employer satisfaction	What do employers identify as having improved
Changes to provision	What have providers changed to deliver on the measures identified in the LSIP
New provision	What new provision has resulted from the LSIP
Learner engagement	How many learners have been engaged

Progress

In reviewing the progress of the plan three criteria will be used:

- Which of the actions/changes set out in the LSIP have been achieved;
- What has the impact and benefits of the actions/changes been;
- What still needs to be achieved, including any new or more granular intelligence and/or more specific actions that will help achieve this

A steering group of providers, stakeholders and employers will be established to steer activity and representatives will include the MCA and organisations such as DWP and the Careers Service.