

NORTH OF TYNE
LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (LSIP)
PROGRESS REPORT
JUNE 2024



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IMPORTANT NOTES

This progress report has been prepared in accordance with Local Skills Improvement Plans: Stage 2 Guidance (dated November 2023) and is intended to review progress against the local skills improvement plan published in August 2023. This report was produced in June 2024 but publication was delayed due to the pre-election period.

Who is this publication for?

In July 2023 the North of Tyne area Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) became a statutory document setting out 24 recommendations for change to skills provision in the North of Tyne area. The LSIP was produced by the North East Chamber of Commerce acting as lead following in depth consultations with 1767 employers drawn from all sectors who told us about the skills and provision they would like to see and what they expected would be their requirements until 2026.

A significant amount of work has been undertaken by training providers, individual businesses and business representative organisations as a result of the LSIP to ensure training provision in the North of Tyne area meets the requirements of employers. As a result of feedback from employers, existing courses have been enhanced or changed and new courses added. In addition, £2.5million of funding from the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) has provided new state of the art facilities and teaching in our Further Education Colleges, informed by the findings of the LSIP.

The LSIP has also fostered greater collaboration between educational institutions, businesses and stakeholders to strengthen the skills system in the North of Tyne area and ensure that employers have the opportunity to provide a depth of insight to course design.

This document is the first of two annual reports detailing the progress made against those 24 recommendations. The aim is to inform and also encourage businesses to engage with existing and new provision, as well as encouraging the business community to continue to engage with the LSIP process to ensure skills provision in the North of Tyne area remains relevant and meets employer needs.

In the first full year of delivery a lot has been achieved. However, there are areas where we still need to make continued progress, and some priorities which are more challenging to overcome where we will need ongoing input and support from the business community.

The full North of Tyne Local Skills Improvement Plan document [can be found here](#).

Summary of the North of Tyne Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

The North of Tyne Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) aims to ensure that the right people with the right skills are available at the right time to fill current and future job vacancies. It aims to do this by putting employers at the heart of our local skills system by articulating the skills requirements of a large cross section of employers.

The areas of focus for the LSIP included sectors that will experience significant growth over a three year period, sectors with immediate skills shortages and sectors where there are significant planned investments in the economy which may cause skills displacement.

Based on this, the LSIP focused on the following sectors:

- **Construction:** this continues to be a significant feature of the North of Tyne economy, and one which is preparing and adapting for the impact of Net Zero via opportunities including retrofit,
- **Green energy/industrial decarbonisation and Net Zero:** a new and developing sector in the North of Tyne, which includes offshore wind and green transport projects,
- **Health and social care:** Presents an immediate skills challenge, with significant existing vacancy rates and high levels of demand, which is likely to be exacerbated by the government's new commitment to extended funded childcare provision to get more parents into work
- **Business and professional services:** significant in Newcastle and North Tyneside,
- **Culture, creative, tourism and hospitality:** This is a sector with significant immediate vacancy rates as it recovers from the pandemic,
- **Cross-cutting themes:** In addition to the specific sectors outlined above, the LSIP also covers essential cross-cutting skills areas, which were identified through analysis of current vacancies, as well as by building on evidence within the North of Tyne Strategic Skills Plan 2021-23.
 - i) **Digital** ii) **Professional development/business skills** iii) **Employability.**

The North of Tyne is a mixed industrial area with significant strengths in both the manufacturing and service sectors. The area has a strong industrial base with several well-established sectors, as well as opportunities for growth. This is set out clearly in area-based strategies such as Opportunity for All: The North of Tyne Strategic Skills Plan 2021-23. However, the North of Tyne economy faces challenges, including low business density, a skilled but ageing workforce, skills shortages in key sectors, growth in new technologies, and recruitment and retention difficulties in rural areas.

There are also some sectors, such as construction, health and social care, and tourism and hospitality, with large numbers of current vacancies and significant future growth predicted. However, these sectors already struggle to attract enough people into the workforce now. The skills system has a role to play in strengthening the match between the supply of skilled people and the available roles, and ensuring career pathways in these sectors are clear and well understood.

Employer engagement as part of the LSIP has been a continuous process throughout the last year. It has included further conversations and expanding on the initial 1767 businesses engaged throughout the initial research through general networking and industry events, along with a continued partnership approach with providers and the North of Tyne Combined Authority.

Strategic and economic context update

Data below gives a brief snapshot of the economy in the North of Tyne. While currently below the national growth rate, jobs have increased in the area since 2018, and are projected to steadily increase in the next five years. The LSIP focused on several key sectors, highlighted in the remainder of this section.

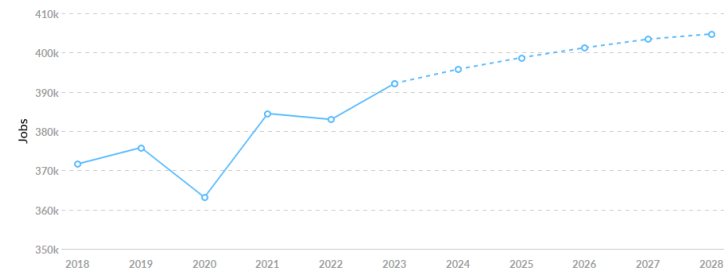
Figure 1

2023 Labour Force Breakdown



Figure 2

From 2018 to 2023, jobs increased by 5.5% in 3 North East Local Authorities from 371,632 to 392,159. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 6.5% by 1.0%.



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CONSTRUCTION

The significant demand for construction skills has been maintained and there is increasing demand for specialist skills in retrofit, not least from the social housing sector.

NET ZERO

In the year since the production of the LSIP there has been a number of developments in the Net Zero Sector. When the LSIP was produced it was anticipated that the development of a large battery manufacturing facility in Blyth would soon commence. Unfortunately, the project did not come to fruition.

However, other projects in the Net Zero space have moved forward at pace and a significant Investment Zone covering Blyth and the North Bank of the Tyne will encompass a green super port, supporting a number of new jobs opportunities and contribute significantly to the development of the offshore wind sector.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The high level of vacancies within the health and social care sector remains challenging: the original LSIP acknowledged that high vacancy rates were a combination of factors including pay and working conditions. The tables below highlight this, showing that North of Tyne is 23% above the national average

in terms of job availability, with a projected 57.8% growth in the sector over a thirty-year period. The data also supports the reported difficulty in recruitment, with Figure 5 showing a job posting intensity of 4:1. This means employers need to post a single job listing four times before someone is recruited. This outweighs the regional average of 2:1, demonstrating a challenge in terms of recruitment to this sector.

However, the LSIP also recognised the skills system has a part to play, particularly in supporting resilience and stability in the workforce and providing and promoting attractive career pathways.

Figure 3



Figure 4

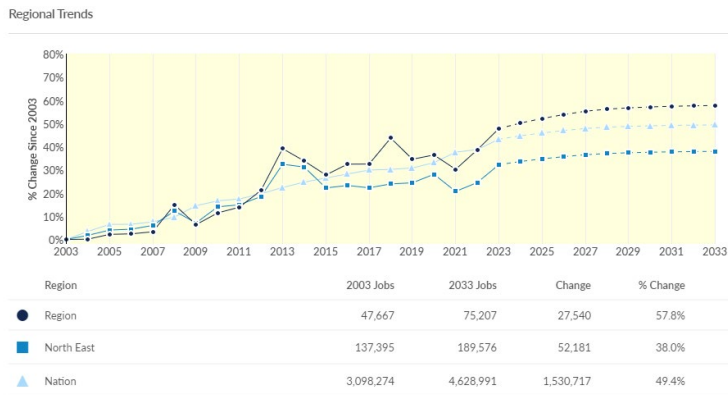
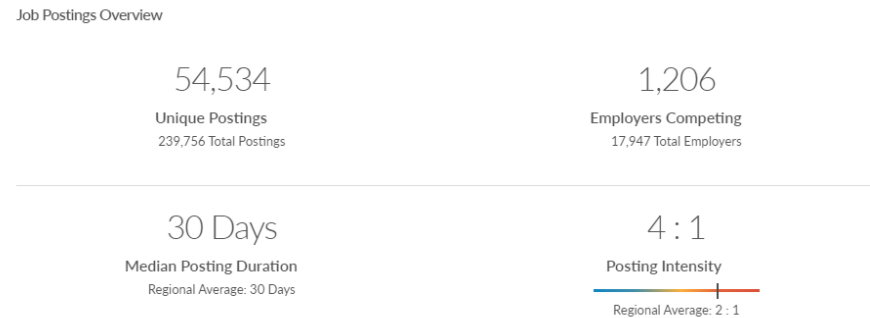


Figure 5



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The sector will also be affected by national policy changes. In April 2024, the NHS produced its Long-Term Workforce Plan which set out key ambitions to:

- Train: significantly increasing education and training to record levels
- Retain: retaining the trained workforce within the health service by better supporting people throughout their careers
- Reform: building broader teams with flexible skills, changing education and training to deliver more staff in roles and services where they are needed most, and ensuring staff have the right skills to take advantage of new technology

These ambitions have aligned with the LSIP and, although there is still a requirement for a significant increase in new entrants to the health and social care sector.

Childcare

In 2023 the government committed to a significant policy to encourage more parents into work, recognising this was one of the major reasons for skilled workers either leaving work or reducing their hours. A number of changes to the national entitlement for working parents to help with financing childcare are being made in the lifetime of this LSIP.

From April 2024, eligible working parents of two-year-olds can access 15 hours childcare support. By September 2025, most working families with children aged between nine months and five years old will be entitled to 30 hours of childcare support.

Whilst the original LSIP did not look at the childcare sector as a subsector of health and social care, we recognise that it is a significant change which has the potential to have a major impact on skills provision as demand for childcare places increases. As part of this progress report, we have undertaken a short consultation exercise with childcare providers in the North of Tyne area to ascertain the levels of increased demand for skills in the sector.

Business And Professional

The business and professional sector in the North of Tyne area continues to flourish and grow with a number of large professional firms opening satellite offices in the area. There is also increasing demand for support from professional services firms in growth sectors. Demand for qualified staff is strong and there remains strong competition for a skilled workforce from other parts of the country. The North of Tyne area continues to lose a large number of graduates to other regions. Many employers and providers are now looking to increase places for alternative training pathways into the sector such as degree apprenticeships which are more likely to encourage people to remain in the local area post-qualification.

Devolution

In March 2024 the government announced a new trailblazer devolution deal for the North East area. Building on a foundational agreement made in late 2022, the trailblazer deal set out the framework for a new range of powers and investments covering an extended geographic footprint. In May 2024 the North of Tyne Combined Authority area, covering Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland was replaced by the new North East Combined Authority, covering the original three districts as well as Gateshead, Sunderland, South Tyneside and County Durham. The new authority now serves a population of 1,995,000 residents, 55,000 businesses and, over the course of its 30-year lifetime will aim to deliver £1.4bn in investment and financial leverage over 30 years. It will encompass both this LSIP and the South of Tyne LSIP delivered by the North East Automotive Alliance. To ensure effective transition across the new arrangement NECA officers and leads from the two LSIPs are now meeting regularly.

The new combined authority brings together a range of functions including transport and the economic development responsibilities of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership. The Adult Education Budget which supports 19 years+ work-related education and training will be commissioned by the authority. Key programmes and projects established under the original North of Tyne Combined Authority, such as the successful bid for an Investment Zone, supporting new investment and innovation in electric vehicle manufacturing, battery production, offshore wind and low-carbon materials, will support the sector priorities and activities identified by both LSIPs. The Zone is expected to leverage at least £3 billion investment and create more than 4,000 jobs over the next 10 years. This has the potential to increase the demand for, and accelerate the impact of, the LSIP.

Priorities and actions (Roadmap): what has been achieved so far

An overview of activity to date is contained in the tables below. For further details, please refer to the table in Annex A

COMMUNICATION, CONFIDENCE AND EMPLOYABILITY

Colleges, providers and commissioners have firmly embraced the recommendations in the LSIP on communication and confidence skills building and recognise it as an important issue for individuals and employers.

All colleges have reviewed their curriculum and students will be required to engage in projects enhancing communication skills such as competitions, presentations and role playing. Northumberland College have a specific Self, Society and Skills programme focusing on employability.

In terms of work-based skills and behaviours such as presentations, customer service and business communication; there have been a number of measures put in place to ensure more emphasis is placed on employer need they include:

- events engaging students on employability skills,
- working groups to focus on employer needs,
- curriculum v industry events.

These are important steps forward: when progress is compared against our LSIP roadmap of activity there is more work to be done in the following areas.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation	Monitoring arrangements	Progress status
Communication skills - verbal, confidence, written business skills	North of Tyne colleges are embedding communication skills in existing provision, and engaging with a range of employers and stakeholders to ensure these skills are aligned with employer need. Communication skills are embedded in all 4 LSIF projects across the area. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps as part of its devolved AEB commissioning for the forthcoming academic year.	A range of local employers are collaborating with North of Tyne colleges.	Original deadline projected for January 24 – May 25. Most plans have been put in place or are in progress. The start of the new academic year 24/25 will see plans solidified. The ERB deep dive research is also in progress which will actively support this work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF • Colleges reviewing existing courses • New provision from colleges • ERB research on communication and confidence skills 	There will be limited changes until the new academic year 24/25. ERB will then proceed with monitoring number of students enrolled on courses etc.	On track to deliver
Work based skills -	Work based skills are embedded in all 4 LSIF projects. North of Tyne	As above.	Original deadline projected for May 24 –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF 	As above.	On track to deliver.

knowledge of workplace behaviours, resilience, teamwork, confidence	colleges engage with local businesses through employer advisory boards to deliver provision that is aligned with employer needs. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps.		May 25. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tyne Coast have restructured employer advisory boards • Colleges continuing existing provision 		
Employer/college co-working	North of Tyne colleges engage with local employers and stakeholders to facilitate employer/college co-working.	As above.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 25. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer engagement • Engagement with HE 	As above.	On track to deliver.

In addition, as part of our LSIP work, we have commissioned a deep dive research exercise to look at best practice in delivering communication and confidence skills and what we can learn from other areas to apply to the North of Tyne area.

DIGITAL SKILLS

Along with communication skills, employers also raised general digital skills as a key priority for both new and existing employees. Whilst employers recognised that most people have some level of digital literacy e.g. mobile phone use, they were particularly keen to see a strengthening of business skills in the use of software packages such as MS Office which they see as fundamental to the workplace. They asked specifically for provision which encourages individuals to regularly update their skills to keep pace with software and technology changes. In addition, there was a call for sector specific digital skills to be recognised and more digitisation in courses.

Again, providers have responded well to these priorities. The measures put in place include:

- Expansion of digital literacy courses, both basics and refresher courses for employability programmes, aiming for over 900 learners in 2024/5.
- New bootcamps (short courses aimed at providing a defined skill level and a guaranteed interview) incorporating digital skills both general and specific. The Combined Authority are seeking to commission level 3 digital bootcamps in a number of subjects including networks, data analytics, software engineering and digital marketing.
- Working with local employers to co-design courses to incorporate digital elements in areas such as construction, engineering, manufacturing and professional services.
- Provision for coding and web app development.
- Expansion of digital provision in engineering courses, to incorporate industry standard software.
- Development of cyber security apprenticeships.
- Upskilling of staff in artificial intelligence technology to respond to demand as it develops.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation	Monitoring arrangements	Progress status
Digital literacy / digital refresher	Digital skills are embedded in all 4 LSIF projects. North of Tyne colleges have new provision to enhance these skills. NCTA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps.	As above.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 25. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF • New provision from colleges 	As above.	On track to deliver.
Sector specific digital skills	North of Tyne colleges have added provision to address sector-specific digital skills. LSIF Project 1: Construction also incorporates this. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps. CITB offering products, grants, and services to support this LSIP priority.	As above.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 25. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF Project 1: Construction • Colleges revising curriculum • New provision from colleges 	As above.	On track to deliver.
Communication skills training (digital)	North of Tyne colleges have embedded communication skills in digital training, adding new provision. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps.	As above.	Original deadline projected for November 23 – May 25. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF • New provision from colleges 	As above.	On track to deliver.

CONSTRUCTION/NET ZERO – RETROFIT

The LSIP recognised there will be significant demand for retrofit skills over the lifetime of the LSIP as much of the social housing stock in the North of Tyne area is refurbished. Retrofit provision formed a significant part of the Local Skills Improvement Fund bid and providers have worked closely with employers to design courses. Key measures include:

- Digitisation of the curriculum to incorporate green technology installation, software and control systems
- New short course on solar charging at Tyne Coast College

- Centre of Excellence for simulated construction and retrofit including groundworks, fibre optics, cabling and installation at Tyne Coast College

In addition to new provision and knowledge transfer a “Green Skills Ambassador” to work with industry to ensure skills provision continues to align with a rapidly developing industry.

Lucy Dixon, Head of External Affairs, Karbon Homes - We welcome the provisions that have been put in place in the LSIP for green skills. It's a challenge for our sector to ensure that we can recruit people with the skills we need for current and future retrofit and decarbonisation work. Having dedicated training facilities and ambassadors for green skills will help to create a pipeline of talent in this area.

Michael Farr, Executive Director of Assets and Growth, Bernicia - It's reassuring to see the Local Skills Improvement Plan recognise the skills challenges for the green energy and net zero sector, while highlighting the courses and apprenticeships offered in the North of Tyne area to boost green skills. Understanding industry need in decarbonisation and retrofit and then working to meet those requirements is crucial in the transition to a green economy

NET ZERO – WIND ENERGY AND RENEWABLES

The Local Skills Improvement Fund will contribute significantly to building skills capability in the wind energy and renewables sector. This is a strong example of an effective collaboration between colleges, employers and universities and recognises the opportunities the sector presents, particularly following devolution and the creation of the Investment Zone which will accelerate development in this sector. Provision includes:

- New level 3 renewable energy and Net Zero module to assist with movement of employees from current oil and gas-focused activity to offshore wind,
- Specialist Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machining provision tailored to the offshore wind industry and battery technology,
- A range of short, modular courses including hydraulics, wind turbine maintenance and hydrogen power systems,
- New specialist welding and fabrication provision supported by digital technology,
- Knowledge transfer from universities through Energy North East Universities (ReNU) the Centre for Doctoral Training in Renewable Energy.

This is a fast-moving area where development is going to happen quickly, and skill requirements could change significantly as the Investment Zone develops. The provision in place will ensure a strong pipeline of skills for both large operators and the supply chain.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation	Monitoring arrangements	Progress status
Retrofit provision	LSIF funding, upskilling staff and new provision in the North of Tyne all support the delivery of retrofit training in the local	LSIF project partners working collaboratively with local employers.	Original deadline projected for May 25. Most plans have been put in place or are in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF • College staff upskilled 	As above.	On track to deliver

	area. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps. CITB offering products, grants, and services to support this LSIP priority.		progress. The start of the new academic year 24/25 will see plans solidified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleges revising curriculum New provision from colleges 		
Wind and renewables provision	LSIF funding, new industry standard training facilities and stakeholder engagement all support the delivery of wind and renewables training. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps. CITB offering products, grants, and services to support this LSIP priority.	Collaboration across NoT colleges, universities, employers, and other key stakeholders.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 26. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSIF Stakeholder collaboration 	As above.	On track to deliver
Flexible apprenticeship schemes	North of Tyne colleges are currently investigating flexible apprenticeships in construction. ERB will be conducting deep dive research into shared apprenticeship model towards the end of 2024.	ERB to work with providers and local employers to explore flexible apprenticeship model and propose a potential approach for NoT stakeholders.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 25. Deadline may need to be extended to account for ERB research and 24/25 delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERB deep dive research 	As above.	Not on track to deliver.
Industry tutor and mentor programme	LSIF funding, marketing campaign and appointment of a Green Skills ambassador in North of Tyne to promote industry tutor and mentor programme.	Collaboration between colleges and employers.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 25. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSIF College marketing campaign Consultation 	As above.	On track to deliver.
Skills 'passport'	Collaboration between college and higher education, and staff being	Newcastle College partnering with Newcastle University.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 26. No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College staff upskilled 	As above.	On track to deliver.

	upskilled, to work towards a skills 'passport' to allow recognition of skills and qualifications to facilitate easier movement between sector.		revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research with Newcastle University • Adult Education Budget funding 		
Recognition of qualifications and transferable skills from alternative sectors	Newcastle College collaborating with Newcastle University to develop industry insights. Tyne Coast have engaged employers to receive employee case studies for those who have received ASHP training, and how this links with green energy qualifications.	North of Tyne colleges collaborating with higher education and local employers.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – November 24. This deadline will need to be extended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer engagement • Research with Newcastle University 	As above.	Not on track to deliver.
Work and site experience	Work and site experience embedded in LSIF projects. Close links between North of Tyne colleges and local employers to facilitate work experience.	North of Tyne colleges working closely with local employers.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 26. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF • Employer engagement • LSIP advisory board • Collaboration across colleges 	As above.	On track to deliver.

Tom Nightingale, UK Supply Chain Leader, Equinor - Green skills will be critical for Offshore Wind in North East England. The provisions introduced by the LSIP for green skills will be needed for the energy industry, in which this area is already a leading light in the UK. We have a rare opportunity in the local area to align our growing energy requirements with the future growth in automotive battery technology, where green skills will crossover with these sectors that are so critical for our local communities. The future skills needs will be a major challenge and new training provision and facilities matched with key ambassadors will help establish the right provision at the right time.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The health and social care sector still has significant recruitment challenges requiring a collaborative approach to careers development, recruitment and skills. Again, providers have taken a very collaborative approach in responding to the LSIP priorities set out by employers. Colleges, training providers, universities and the NHS have come together to look at the provision of skills, where there are currently gaps and how they can meet the needs of operators in the social care system. New facilities and provision have been developed, which include:

- A new simulated hospital ward which offers significant digital training, matching the LSIP recommendation for sector-specific digital skills.
- Ongoing engagement with employers through a Nurse Practitioner college ambassador who will update courses to match local demand by working closely with employers.
- New equipment and short courses in specialisms such as sight and motor function, neuro rehabilitation and biotechnology in the care sector
- New interactive virtual reality software to allow training in real-time scenarios.
- Upskilling adults with short courses in the use of basic life science equipment.

Communication skills in the health and social care sector were raised as a major priority by employers. Providers are working with the NHS to embed communication with an emphasis on delivering effective patient care in all modules.

Recruitment in the social care sector remains difficult. Whilst the LSIP recognised that pay and conditions are significant factors driving vacancy rates, the measures above are designed not only to improve skills, but also to make individuals entering the sector more resilient, clarify expectations of employees and help people develop a pathway based on a suite of specialist skills to support positive career progression.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation	Monitoring arrangements	Progress status
Work and site experience	LSIF Project 3: Health and Social Care embeds work experience across health and social care sector.	North of Tyne colleges working closely with local employers and stakeholders.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 26. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF • Employer engagement • LSIF Advisory group • Collaboration across colleges 	As above.	On track to deliver.
Career pathway promotion	North of Tyne colleges have closely aligned curriculum with needs of local employers. New provision has been added and guest speakers attend college events to deliver preparation for work sessions and promote careers in sector.	As above.	Original deadline projected for May 23– November 24. No revision to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New provision from colleges • Guest speakers • Close links with health and social care employers 	As above.	On track to deliver
Review of careers advice	LSIF funding, new facilities, and new provision support greater	As above.	Original deadline projected for May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF 	As above.	On track to deliver.

and provision of short taster courses	<p>understanding of sector. Northumberland College have recruited a Nurse Practitioner to engage with employers and develop up-to-date practices within the curriculum. This will ensure close relationship between provider and sector and enhance career's advice for learners.</p> <p>Combined Authority bootcamp commissioned to assist anyone wishing to work as a care assistant</p>		<p>23– May 24. Timescale to be extended as LSIF projects projected to be complete end of May 25.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New provision from colleges • LSIP Advisory group 		
Patient-focused communication skills	<p>LSIF Project 3: Health and Social Care, new provision and resources in North of Tyne embeds patient-focused communication skills in training.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>Original deadline projected for May 23– May 24. Timescale to be extended as LSIF projects projected to be complete end of May 25.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF • New provision from colleges • New learning and training resources in colleges 	<p>As above.</p>	<p>On track to deliver.</p>

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The business and professional services sector in the North of Tyne area is strong but still faces challenges in attracting and retaining employees against competition from other regions. In addition, the sector is key to supporting the grow of established and new industries locally which require financial, legal, planning and other types of professional service support. The new Investment zone will be a key driver of economic growth in the North of Tyne and the business and professional services sector will need to develop in tandem with the investment and incentive opportunities it presents.

Providers have developed their offer for the business and professional sector, but there is still more to do to improve provision.

The Combined Authority has responded to the LSIP and commissioned a Level 3 bootcamp in project management and a level 4 qualification in leadership and management.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation	Monitoring arrangements	Progress status
Sector specific training	North of Tyne colleges are revising existing provision and introducing blended/distance learning to support delivery of professional services training. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps.	N/A	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 26. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleges revised existing provision Colleges reviewing delivery method 	As above.	On track to deliver.
Local continuous professional development and regional economic focused development provision for professional services	Progress on this priority has been limited. Discussions are underway with universities in the local area to look at a package of CPD and training tailored to the local economy. Combined Authority commissioning skills bootcamps in Project Management Level 3	Universities ERB	Original deadline projected for May 24 – November 24. This will need to be extended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative work on programme design. 	As above.	Not on track to deliver
Financial services provision	See sector specific training section above. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps.	N/A	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 26. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleges reviewing existing provision Colleges reviewing delivery method 	As above.	On track to deliver.
AI and cyber security training and skills	North of Tyne colleges upskilling staff in AI and cyber security and have introduced new provision to build these skills. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps.	N/A	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 26. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College staff upskilled New and revised provision from Colleges 	As above.	Completed.

CULTURE, CREATIVE, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

This sector has seen significant growth since the pandemic and expectations are that the sector will continue to grow over the lifetime of the LSIP. Culture, hospitality and tourism is a key priority for the new North East Combined Authority and there are ambitions to further develop the visitor economy. Those ambitions build on a strong base but the sector also faces a number of challenges including recruitment and skills gaps. Changes in the industry and the adoption of good practice models are beginning to address the issue of pay and conditions: the measures put in place against LSIP priorities seek to develop a broader skills offer meeting employer needs. New measures include:

- Upskilling tutors to ensure up to date skills which provide an in-depth knowledge of current industry trends and specialisms
- Development of specialist short courses and masterclasses in key areas such as butchery, patisserie, specialist dietary requirements, sustainability and waste management
- Pre-employment food safety courses to allow individuals entering or returning to the industry to be work ready
- Dialogue with employers on flexible delivery methods to fit around hospitality hours
- Tourism and hospitality taster sessions to encourage entry into the industry

The Combined Authority has also commissioned bootcamps to help individuals gain hands-on experience of working in the hospitality sector to help to ease the significant skill shortages experienced by the sector.

During the LSIP fieldwork, employers in the sector raised the issue of rurality and the difficulties in accessing training. As a response to those issues, Newcastle College has used LSIF funding to upgrade its catering facilities to allow livestreaming of courses and masterclasses to enable remote learner access.

Stage and screen is a growing sector and the announcement of government support for the Crown Works film studios site in Sunderland and projects in the Tees Valley will lead to a significant increase in demand for these skills across the wider local area. The LSIP highlighted the need for more practical experience in technical support for venue and production staff. Technical and stage bootcamps have been developed with significant success rates for moving individuals into the sector.

In the culture and creative sectors, the LSIP highlighted the issue of business support for non-traditional business models such as community interest companies, not-for-profit or volunteer-based organisations. It can also be difficult to source business support targeted at consumer facing businesses and traditional business support is often not tailored to the creative sector. To address this Newcastle College is looking to adapt some higher education provision around entrepreneurship in the creative sector supporting both graduates and existing businesses.

Priority	Activity	Partners involved	Timescales	Method of implementation	Monitoring arrangements	Progress status
Work and site experience	North of Tyne colleges seeking work and site experience within relevant sectors in the cultural,	Consultation with a range of local employers.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 26. No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer engagement 	As above.	On track to deliver.

	creative, hospitality and tourism industries.		revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tyne Coast employer advisory board • Collaboration across colleges 		
Specialist catering provision	LSIF Project 4: Hospitality and Tourism and North of Tyne colleges have introduced upgraded training facilities, industry standard resources, and livestreamed skills masterclasses, to enhance catering skills. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps.	A sector 'Ambassador' will be appointed by Newcastle College and Northumberland College to engage with employers across NoT to understand industry needs.	Original deadline projected for November 23 to May 25. Much of these plans are in progress and should be in place for the academic year 25.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSIF 	As above.	On track to deliver.
Security staff training	NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps.	No progress. North of Tyne Colleges have no plans to deliver security staff training.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 25. This will need to be revised due to limited activity.	No progress.	As above.	Not on track to deliver.
Business courses - alternative company structures	Continued delivery of content on entrepreneurship and employability. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps.	N/A	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 25. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges reviewing existing provision 	As above.	On track to deliver.
Greater practical provision for technical and stage staff	North of Tyne colleges delivering new provision and engaging with local employers. NTCA has sought proposals for courses, programmes and bootcamps.	Consultation with a range of local employers and stakeholders.	Original deadline projected for May 24 – May 25. No revisions to timescale needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer engagement • New provision from colleges 	As above.	On track to deliver.

What still needs to be achieved?

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SKILLS SYSTEM

In phase two of the LSIP we have conducted a deep dive piece of research into employer engagement with the skills system. As Phase 1 focused on skills needs, this research explores the experience of accessing the skills system, and if there are any barriers to engagement. Fieldwork has been carried out between January and May 2024, with 292 businesses in the North of Tyne sharing their views.

The findings of this research will be used to identify barriers, with a view to making an active change to the skills landscape. This will ensure that training for the skills needs identified in Phase 1 can be easily accessed, resulting in a skilled North of Tyne workforce that meets employer needs. We are in the process of analysing this data and will be able to make recommendations based on these findings once this has been completed in June.

COMMUNICATION, CONFIDENCE AND EMPLOYABILITY

Whilst providers have committed to reviewing their curriculum for communication skills, employers see it as one of the most significant issues they face in recruitment and skills. Employers also believe the issue will be compounded over the next three years as the impact of the pandemic and changes to more remote working patterns feed through into the labour force.

To help providers look at provision and best practice in learning, we will be conducting a deep dive research project into communication skills in 2024.

DIGITAL SKILLS

Whilst very significant progress has been made in embedding digital skills into course provision, progress is still required in encouraging people in work to update and refresh their digital business skills including Excel and the MS Office suite.

A large proportion of the workforce use business software, including Excel in some form yet have had no, regular substantive training to update those skills. For example, Excel has major new updates on average every two years and has moved from being a spreadsheet and accountancy programme to being a powerful data analysis tool.

INDUSTRY TUTORS

The shortage of tutors in key sectors remains an issue with high vacancy rates in key sectors such as construction and engineering. Local providers have worked hard to encourage individuals into teaching, but, so far, they have had a limited success. High levels of private sector pay and industry demand are among the factors contributing to the issue.

During the LSIP fieldwork a number of the large, private sector employers suggested there may be potential for schemes where they can lend employee time to teach in specialist areas. This is a complex area; however, we would like to bring employers, providers and stakeholders together to see if this may be a feasible option. We will instigate a number of roundtables working with local stakeholders to look at progressing this issue.

WORK EXPERIENCE

When conducting the fieldwork for the LSIP many employers were clear that they value relevant work experience alongside qualifications. This was a particular feature in the construction and engineering sectors. Analysis of job advertisements bears this out with many employers asking for three-five years' experience.

Employers also recognise the issue of skills shortages in their sector and the need to attract more people, but it is often difficult for newly qualified individuals to gain entry due to the requirement for experience.

When challenged on this issue, many employers acknowledge they do not offer work experience or onsite training programmes. The reasons for this are varied ranging from time constraints, insurance issues or health and safety concerns.

This is a difficult issue to tackle and for a long time has often been seen as "too difficult" to crack. There are some small initiatives such as the CITB's employer bursary, the [Into Work Grant](#) but they tend to be smaller scale.

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

There is still a gap in the system in delivering high quality, local CPD provision which is tailored to the local economy. University departments have begun to look at this issue and are considering developing CPD modules and commercial seminars aligned to the local economy but it is in the early stages of development.

CHILDCARE

As part of the LSIP review processes, it is incumbent upon the ERB to look at further changes in the economy and whether there is a requirement to add further priorities to the LSIP Roadmap.

2024 will see significant changes to childcare funding with free nursery hours being significantly expanded to 30 hours per week available from 9 months old for most working parents. This measure could have a significant impact on skills demand. To gauge potential demand we contacted all 380 early years providers who are employers in the North of Tyne area with a small number of research questions. Whilst some employers declined to take part, we did receive significant feedback from 20% of those contacted.

22% of providers said that they would be looking to increase their workforce with the reason given that they would need to increase the number of level 2 and level 3 qualified staff. 66% said they would not be looking to increase their workforce, 7% answered that they may need to increase their workforce, and 5% said they didn't know.

Only 1% were looking to recruit an apprentice and 60% would be seeking to recruit experienced staff through job advertisements.

In terms of skills needs, 43% of respondents identified a skills gap in their sector. 79% sought softer skills such as communication and a passion for work.

Based on the figures and current provision in the North of Tyne, we are not making any recommendations for further LSIP priorities at this stage. This is because the overall response from the North of Tyne is too small to be significant. We will, however, pass these findings to providers, and continue to monitor how communication skills as a cross-sector priority is embedded into North of Tyne provision.

